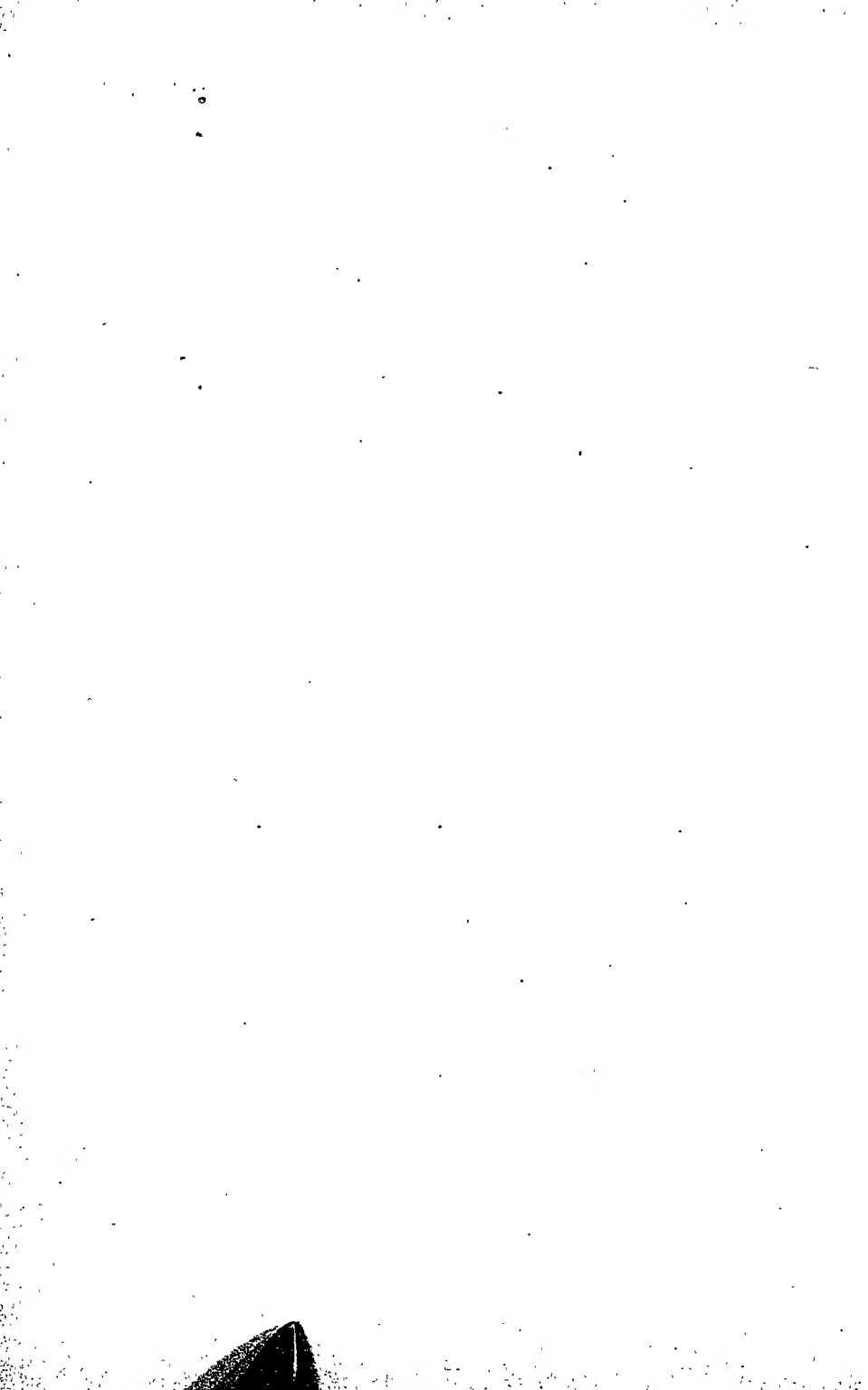
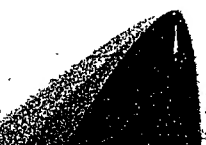


TRAILS OF YESTERDAY

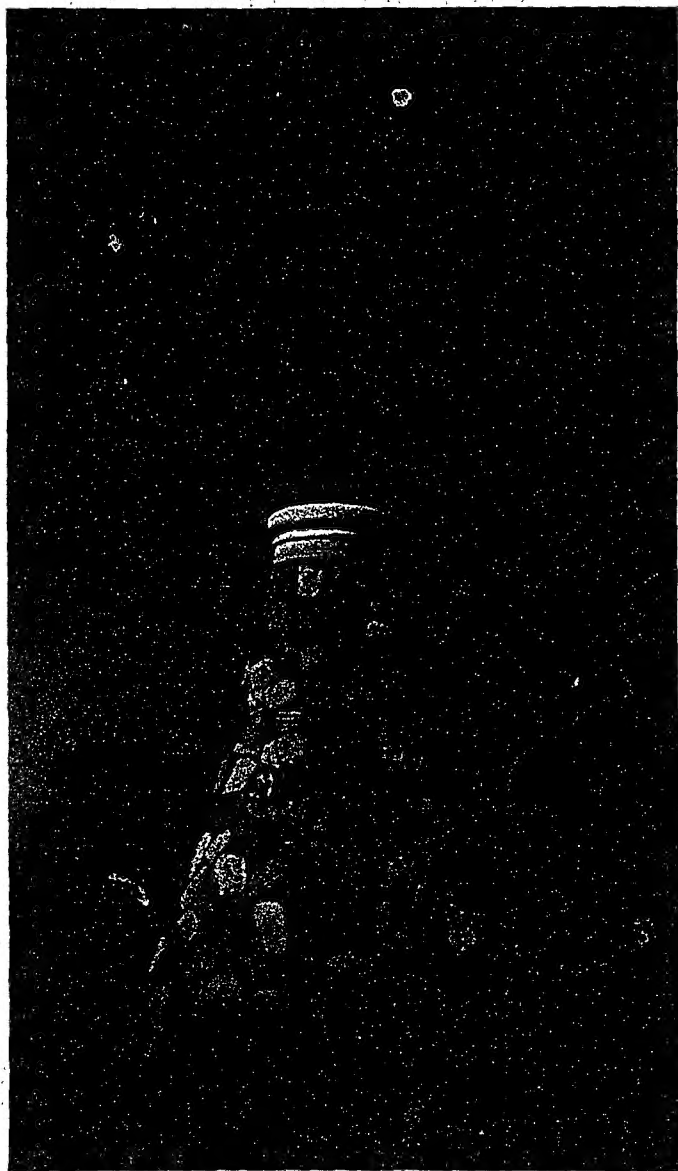
ANNIE L. GAETZ



Net. L. 27533



TRAILS OF YESTERDAY



A Memorial to the Pioneers of the Red Deer District

Trails of Yesterday

*Folk Lore
of the Red Deer District*

By

ANNIE L. GAETZ,

author of

THE PARK COUNTRY
HISTORY OF RED DEER AND DISTRICT



DEDICATED

To the Memory of The Pioneers of the
Red Deer District, their dreams, their
strivings and their accomplishments.



CONTENTS

CHAPTER	<i>Page</i>
I Beginnings	1
II Place Names of the Red Deer District	16
III Student Missionaries	23
IV Farming	32
V Politics	38
VI Bachelors	45
VII Fun and Frolic	53
VIII Short Shorts	59
IX Indians—Their Myths and Traditions	73
X Our Cairn	96



P R E F A C E

The Red Deer district is rich in folk lore, in stories of unusual happenings and experiences of pioneer days. These homely tales, though unimportant in themselves, help to complete a picture of the early days of the district.

It is a picture of hardy Pioneers, sturdy, God-fearing men and women, humble and strong. Their mould was set by circumstances, and the ever present necessity for food and shelter, forced them into strength, courage and self-reliance.

It is the purpose of this book to preserve these intimate tales for the benefit of future generations. A brief outline of early settlement is also included, so as to make the picture more complete.

TRAILS OF YESTERDAY



CHAPTER I

Beginnings

No more fascinating story has been told or written, than that of the Alberta Pioneers, who came to this country as trappers, traders, missionaries, soldiers, homesteaders and adventurers, coming from all corners of the earth.

They came by devious ways, bringing with them their customs and traditions; but most important of all, they brought with them, home-loving hearts, and a willingness to work and endure hardships.

Perhaps no district of Alberta can boast of a better class of citizens, religiously, intellectually and financially, than the Red Deer district. This is largely due to the willingness, courage and diligence with which they, and their pioneer fathers met and overcame difficulties. Life was not easy for these Pioneers; but depth of character and self-reliance are not won the easy way.

Old things become precious because of their hallowed associations, and the wealth of memories they recall. So it is with the early days of the Red Deer district. Time has dimmed the memory of these early happenings; and practically all of the real Pioneers of the Red Deer district have passed beyond the Great Divide; but the memory of their early struggles, their hardships and achievements, live on in the minds and hearts of a grateful people.

The Red Deer Crossing three-and-half miles upstream from Red Deer, was the hub of civilization in the district at a very early date. It was the only place for miles up and down the river where a safe crossing could be made at all seasons of the year, and was known to Indians, traders, missionaries, adventurers and rum-runners long before settlement came in.

Even the buffalo took advantage of the Red Deer Crossing on their annual trek south in the fall and on the return journey north in the spring. The Indians passed over the crossing when they went north or south to visit or fight with other Indians, or to trade in furs.

Indian trails always followed along the higher ridges so as to avoid the danger of being ambushed from above. When the first freighters came through, the Red River carts or bull teams followed the Indian trails to avoid the sloughs and mud holes. Like the Indians, they forded the river at the Red Deer Crossing.

Since the Crossing was well known to all frequenters of the trail, it was to be expected that the first settlers in the district should locate there. Many came in the early days who stayed but a short time and made no contribution to the district. It was the men and women who remained to develop the land, build our schools, churches, roads, bridges and hospitals, who were of real value in building up the district.

At a very early date, Addison MacPherson, an old freighter and trader, built a small log shack at the

Crossing, standing very close to the river. He used it as a place to stop while passing through or trading with the Indians in the vicinity. This shack remained for years after settlers arrived. In '72, MacPherson and Donald MacLeod, also an old freighter and trader, built a very small shack, or shelter, about a quarter of a mile north of where the Bannerman buildings were later located on the north side. They spent the winter there trapping and trading with the Indians. In the fall of '82, Jack Little built a small shack near the south end of where the river traffic bridge stands today. He brought in a bunch of horses and spent the winter at the shack trapping and trading off the horses with the Indians for furs. These were what you might call a drifting people, here today and gone tomorrow.

In 1881, John T. Moore, representing the Saskatchewan Land and Homestead Co., made a prospecting trip through Alberta scouting for land for his Company. In the course of his trip he camped at Waskasoo creek in the south of what is now Red Deer, and very early in the morning he rode to the top of Piper's Mount. Sitting on his horse, from this point he viewed the surrounding country. He was greatly taken with its beauty and possibilities as an agricultural district, and he decided that this was the land for which he was looking. In a track thirty miles long and twelve miles wide, centering at Red Deer, he procured for his company thirty thousand acres.

The first real settlers in the Red Deer district came to the Red Deer crossing in the fall of '82, when

George and Jim Beatty, cousins, and Bill Kemp, a distant cousin, built a shack on the river flat, later known as the Beatty Flats, or Sad Hollow, about three miles up-stream from the Crossing. George Beatty and Bill Kemp remained here for the winter, and Jim Beatty joined them again the following summer. That summer of '83, George Beatty and Bill Kemp cultivated six acres of land. Except for Indian purposes, this was supposed to be the first land cultivated between Calgary and Edmonton.

That summer of '83, Bob McClelland, a freighter, homesteaded on the crossing flat and kept stoppers in his home. He also grew oats to sell to the freighters for their oxen. These four bachelors were noted for their open-hearted friendliness, ever ready to help and advise in-coming settlers, and many a settler's shack was made more secure by the kindly help of these men.

In the summer of '82 or '83, Dan Dobbler and his wife located a homesite east of Red Deer a couple of miles, and remained there for a time. They went back east and settled up their affairs and returned again to make their home on the land they had selected. They were very resourceful people, able to make do with whatever they had on hand. On their first trip, they drove all the way from Ontario behind a team of oxen, coming around the American side into Canada. When they got to a point about where Moose Jaw now stands, their oxen got so footsore that they were obliged to make camp. They had heard the Red Deer district described as "God's Country," and to that country they were bound. They had with them a milk

cow to supply milk for the journey; also the cow's calf, probably as a bait to keep the cow in tow, and they butchered the calf, tanned the hide, made moc-casins for the oxen and proceeded on their journey.

George and Wm. Byers took up squatters claims south of the Crossing in the summer of '83. Later George came back and proved up on his homestead. Another settler coming in probably as early as '83, was Sage Bannerman. He located his buildings on the north side of the river, and later homesteaded a short distance west. He was a wide awake man, taking advantage of every business opportunity. He operated a ferry as early as '84, and also operated freight sheds.

A settler coming in could bring a car load of effects as far as Calgary for very cheap rates; but when he arrived in a district he had to find a place to store his outfit while he located a homesite. Hence freight sheds did a thriving business before the railway came in. Sage Bannerman was joined by his eldest son Jim in '86, and his wife and the remainder of the family came to make their home at the Crossing in '89.

In December '83, Geo. C. King, who operated a large store and kept the post office in Calgary, built a small trading post at the Red Deer Crossing putting a man named Sandy Gilmore in charge. This was the first trading post between Calgary and Edmonton, and was designed to become one of the most historic spots in the Red Deer district. A four horse stage coach carried the mail from Calgary to Edmonton, and shortly after the post was established at the Crossing,

a post office was opened there. Since, for a time, this was the only post office between Calgary and Edmonton, people from a wide area had their mail addressed to the Red Deer Crossing. This gave rise to a mistaken idea that people as far away perhaps as Poplar Grove (Innisfail) were settled at the Crossing. The winter of 1884-5 was very mild with almost no snow and no difficulty was experienced getting through with the stage coach from Calgary to Edmonton; but the winters of '85-86, and '86-87 were very severe with a great depth of snow, and dog teams were used to get through with the mail.

About '83, a trader named Beaupre built across the trail from the King Post, and an Englishman and his half-breed wife, Tom and Mary Lennie made their home there and gave meals to the freighters.

In April '84, Rev. Leonard Gaetz D.D., with his wife and large family took up a homestead where the city of Red Deer now stands. They moved their furniture into the Jack Little shack until a house could be put up. A little later John Stewart brought his wife and family and homesteaded north of Penhold. They pitched their tents at Monk's Hill, so called because Father Lacombe had a small shack there which he used as headquarters when in the district ministering to the Indians. The Stewart family have contributed greatly towards the building up of their community. Wm. Richards and his son John J. Richards homesteaded in the Horn Hill that summer. John Richards married Miss Leathead, daughter of a pioneer district settler, and together they built up a fine farm, running



pure bred stock. Their sons have continued on the farm, their pure bred Ayrshires winning prizes both at home and at distant points.

In August '84, Dr. Gaetz took over the trading post at the Crossing established by G. C. King, and put his eighteen year old son Ray in charge. Mr. King came to the Gaetz home late one night and suggested the deal. No money changed hands or no written agreement was made. Mr. King just suggested that Dr. Gaetz pay him as the money came in. The next morning they went to the post and took stock, and before night Ray, just out of high school, with no knowledge of trade or of the Cree language, became a free trader.

In the winter of '85, came talks of the Rebellion. The Indians had been on such friendly terms with the settlers that they could hardly believe the Rebellion could affect them. Word of the actual outbreak did not reach the settlers until early in April; but mocasin news travelled more quickly, and for a few days before the settlers knew of the danger, the Indians with their wives and children kept moving in to the Crossing flat.

On the evening of April 7th, a horseman came dashing across the ford from the north, and informed the settlers that he was a courier sent from the Government to warn them that the Indians in the north had broken out in rebellion, and all settlers from the Red Deer river south were to gather at the Calgary Fort for protection.

Needless to say there was consternation among the little group of settlers. They had but one rifle among them, a mere handful of settlers amidst a people who, almost over night had changed from a friendly attitude to almost open hostility.

They lost no time in obeying orders, and when they met at the trading post the next day noon, according to arrangements, to begin the long trek south to Calgary, the crossing flat was covered with Indian tents and teepees, and looked almost like a military encampment. The settlers had decided to put on a bold front and leave in daylight, rather than try to sneak away in the darkness of the night. They thought, for awhile the Indians would try to prevent their going; but they stood around in groups and muttered among themselves.

The settlers lived in tents outside the fort while in Calgary, ready to be taken in should the need arise. One night while in Calgary they had a bad scare. During a Presbyterian church service one Sunday evening, a man came in a bit late while heads were bowed in prayer, and, as a joke, he whispered to the man next to him, "the Blackfeet are marching on the town." This man whispered the message to another, and so it went the rounds of the church, gaining credence as it circulated. Finally, it reached the minister who dismissed his fast departing congregation, telling them to go quietly to their homes. The women and children were quickly taken into the fort, while the men hunted up firearms. The local hardware store was soon depleted of arms and ammunition, and those

who could not procure anything more deadly, armed themselves with picks, shovels or anything they could procure and went forth to meet the enemy. As they approached the reserve, which was quite close to the village of Calgary, they were surprised to find everything quiet and the Indians rolled peacefully in their blankets for the night. They realized that the joke was on them.

As soon as the Government realized that the Indians were bent on making mischief, they organized the Alberta fighting force, which was made up of the 65th Royal Rifles from Montreal, Alberta Mounted Rifles, the Winnipeg Light Infantry and Steel's Scouts, together with a muzzle-loading nine-pounder cannon or field gun. Major-General Strange was put in command of the Alberta forces, which were further augmented by a detachment of Mounted Police. Four companies from the Force were sent to Edmonton, and passed by way of the Red Deer Crossing.

The second Division under Major A. B. Perry had a mishap in crossing the Red Deer river. The river had risen to such an extent that fording was impossible, and they made an improvised ferry. After everything else had been taken across safely, the ferry swung out into the current with the cannon, gun carriage, ammunition, harness and gun detachment. All went well until they had almost reached the further side, when the slender rope holding the raft snapped and the raft, with its load, went merrily down the river, to land at a high bank, probably by the north end of the traffic bridge, as it stands today.

In all, four and a half days were lost getting the cannon up and on to the trail; but eventually the troops were on their way, leaving twelve Mounted Police to patrol the Calgary and Edmonton trail.

About three miles down stream from Red Deer, a place that our local writer Kerry Wood has so beautifully named, "Three Mile Bend," very profitable gravel pits have been opened up. In the course of digging operations in 1940, Sandy Curr unearthed a cannon ball, weighing four pounds. At the time, it was thought that this ball might in some way have strayed from the cannon that was being ferried across the river, that it had perhaps frozen in the ice and been carried to this point. Colonel F. C. Jamieson, in charge of a Military Detachment at Red Deer in 1940, wrote to Major A. B. Perry, who had been in charge of the Gun Detachment in '85, and asked for information. He replied that it could not possibly have been lost by his detachment, for they did not use balls of that kind, but only common shell and shrapnel. He said, however, that some of the old "rum runners" had guns in which they might have used balls of that diameter. Artillery officers who saw it said it was an old kind of round shot and not a natural piece of metal. Two such balls were found in the vicinity of Kananaskis Camp during the last war, and similar balls were found in Idaho and down the Columbia River.

To come back to the Red Deer Crossing, twenty men under Lieut. Normandeau remained at the Crossing with instructions to build a fort. The Fort, when

completed on June 26th was named Fort Normandeau after the man in charge. Not a shot was fired from the fort, but it helped to make the Indians realize that the laws of the Great White Mother must be observed.

The men from the settlement did not remain long at Calgary, but returned to their homesteads to look after their stock. Before leaving Calgary the Government supplied them with arms and ammunition so that they would be able to protect themselves if necessary. When they went to the fields to work, they took their arms and ammunition with them.

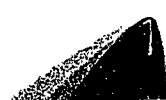
When things had settled down after the Rebellion, the older boys of the Gaetz family persuaded their father to allow them to use the ammunition for target shooting. To their surprise, it failed to ignite. They poured some on paper and set a match to the paper, but still the powder did not burn. It was about dinner time, and there was a hot fire in the kitchen stove, so the boys slipped in and dumped some of the powder on the hot coals. Fortunately there were no results. They never knew whether the Government gave them useless ammunition by mistake, or whether they wanted to make sure they did nothing rash with it. At any rate, it served its purpose, for it made them feel more secure.

The children of the Stewart and Gaetz families took advantage of the opportunity to attend school while in Calgary, remaining there until school closed early in July. They attended school in the first school house built in Calgary, which has recently been restored and

preserved as a relic of by-gone days. An incident of these early school days which stands out in the memory of one member of the Gaetz family, relates to a small boy with an extra heavy thatch of brilliant red hair. The teacher, J. W. Costello, had a very hasty temper and this small boy was unfortunate enough to fall under his displeasure. Grasping him by the hair, the teacher jerked him from his seat, and, with the same hand hold, lifted him up from the floor. Having heard so many stories about scalping, the children sat in fear and trembling, expecting to see a scalping knife make its appearance.

Things settled down to their usual routine, following the Rebellion, and other settlers came in. James Healey, a Jew and a very fine man, opened a trading post across the trail from Ray Gaetz, in the house vacated by Tom and Mary Lennie. This was called a boarding house, because it had a board roof, instead of the usual sod roof. The first settlers to the Balmoral district came that summer, John Gaetz and his mother. John was closely identified with everything for the good of his community and district. He helped organize the first agricultural society of Red Deer, serving as secretary for more than twenty-five years. He was a member of the Provincial Legislature 1918-1921. Tom Hodgson, the man with the green thumb, and John Holgren, known as a good friend and neighbor, also settled in the Balmoral district that summer.

Mr. and Mrs. Chris White were the first white settlers in the Clearview district, coming in the late fall of '85. Over a long period of years, they were



active in everything for the good of their community.

Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Gaetz, popularly known as Uncle Isaac and Aunt Bell, took up land in the south of what is now Red Deer in '86, and built a log house south of Waskasoo Creek, a house which is still standing and occupied. Hec Gaetz took up land in the Clearview district that summer, and his son Percy still carries on, on the same farm. Beau Gaetz came in at the same time. He took up land in the Waskasoo district and later homesteaded down the river.

An important step was taken in the late fall of '86, when a school district was formed and a log school house built, mostly by volunteer labor. This was known as the Red Deer Crossing school, standing half way between the Crossing and Red Deer. It opened with seven pupils, two from the McClelland family and five from the Gaetz family. Later the Stewart children from Penhold, and the Cole children from Springvale attended. Lizzie Martin (Mrs. Wm. Reay) also attended, after her folks came to Ridgewood in 1891. Wilbert Smith came out from Nova Scotia to take charge of the school, the first between Calgary and Edmonton. Wilbert Smith served his country worthily and well, and died while serving his second term as member of the Provincial Legislature.

Tom Gaetz, a young lad of fifteen came out to join his brother Beau at Waskasoo in '87. Tom became a well known and popular business man of Red Deer, serving in many public offices. A cousin Jim Smith came out that year, and a little later was joined by his

brother Joe Smith. Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Cassels settled for a time on the golf course property before taking up a homestead in the Springvale district. Mrs. Cassels became well known as a naturalist, and her lectures on bird life will not soon be forgotten. That year of '89, Jim Dawson who had been with the police force since '82, and Tom Ellis, another young recruit, joined the police force at Fort Normandeau and later as civilians, took their part in building up the community. That spring John Burch bought out James Healey, and with his wife and son Reg. and daughter Ada, took up living quarters in the rooms back of the trading post. They were kindly, hospitable people, and the settlement benefited greatly by their coming.

Mrs. E. C. McLeod, a sister of the Smith brothers came out in 1890, and later made her home in Red Deer. That summer saw a number of practical farmers come to the district, Joseph Cole, Ira Brisbane and Wm. Bawtinheimer to the Springvale district, Andrew Trimble to the Clearview district and Wm. Piper to the Balmoral district. These were family men, interested in advanced farming methods.

Wm. Springbett came to the Red Deer Crossing in the late fall of '90, and opened a blacksmith shop, which filled a long felt want. Mr. Springbett continued the blacksmith work in Red Deer for a great number of years, and by his honest, straight-forward dealings, won the respect of all.


The few settlers in the Red Deer district had long been agitating for a railway, and they were greatly



thrilled when in April '90, the first sod of the Calgary and Edmonton railway was turned. Work on the grade proceeded rapidly, and by fall had reached Red Deer. The work of laying rails started at once, and in December flat cars came in bringing material for the bridge, which was completed in January of '91. In March '91, freight trains came in bringing freight and some passengers. Settlers rode in the cars along with their settler's effects, and if they found a box to sit on, it was all to the good.

As soon as the business men at the Red Deer Crossing realized that they were mis-placed, they began making plans for a move, and by early spring Ray Gaetz, John Burch and Wm. Springbett took up quarters at the new townsite at Red Deer. The police remained at Fort Normandeau until the fall of '91, and the Crossing school continued until the fall term of '92, when the school took up quarters above the Burch Store. Like a thing that has passed its usefulness, the Red Deer Crossing became known as the Old Red Deer Crossing.

The coming of the railway brought to an end pioneer conditions in the immediate Red Deer district. Implements and other needful things could be shipped in, and grain, livestock and other produce shipped out. The old system of barter and exchange gave way to more advanced methods of trade. With the easier transportation new settlers came in, and they were able to do real farming, instead of just holding down a homestead. Schools began to dot the prairies and the district of Red Deer took shape.



CHAPTER II

Place Names of the Red Deer District

Red Deer takes its name from the river which traverses it, the Cree Indian name for which was Waskasoo Sepee, meaning, Red Deer River. The river received that name on account of the numberless red deer frequenting its banks in the very early days. The name Waskasoo however, was not to be forgotten, for the Gaetz family gave this name to the creek which ambled through their farm, now Red Deer.

There is an interesting legend among the Blackfoot Indians as to how Red Deer was shaped into a valley. According to the legend, Napia, Old Man, represented to that tribe the Deity who made the mountains, the hills and the valleys, the lakes, rivers, and all vegetation to grow. On his trip through this Western country creating things as he went along, he paused at what is now Red Deer, and, exhausted, he lay down to sleep. He stretched himself on the earth, and lay there for a long time, and there you may see the imprint of his form.

Be that as it may, Napia, Old Man, chose a beautiful resting place, or, according to the Blackfoot belief, he created beautiful surroundings for his place of rest. Its winding river and numerous streams, its surroundings of tree-clad hills and its many natural beauty spots, sets it apart as a place where men might choose to build a home — a place where people might choose to build a city.



Pine Lake was first known as Ghost Pine Lake, but with the passing of time the word "Ghost" has been deleted and it is known as Pine Lake. North-east of the lake, a bloody battle was once fought between two warring Indian tribes, and when settlers arrived in the district, Indian skulls, battle axes, arrow heads, and other signs of battle were to be found there. At night, Indians gave the lake a wide berth, for they believed that the moving shadows of the pine trees on the lake in the evening, represented the ghosts of the victims of the battle.

Balmoral was named by Mrs. C. M. Gaetz, mother of J. J. Gaetz, first homesteader in the district. The formation of a School District was under consideration, necessitating a name for the district, and Mrs. Gaetz suggested that it would be a gracious gesture to name the district Balmoral, after the Wm. Scott family, recently arrived from Balmoral, Scotland.

To Mrs. Dan McKinnon goes the honor of naming *Clearview*. Neighbours were few and far between when the McKinnons arrived in the district in 1891, and Mrs. McKinnon, in her spare time, enjoyed exploring the many wild beauty spots around her home. Standing on a hill-top she remarked about the wonderfully clear view to be had from that point, and then suggested that Clearview would be a good name for the district.

Horn Hill takes its name from a large heap of horns,

elk, deer and moose. When the first settlers arrived there, this collection stood on the top of a high hill which centers the district. It was thought that the Indians conducted some sort of worship service at this point, and that the horns were symbolic of something connected with that service, known only to the Red Man. As the years passed, the horns have been carried away as souvenirs, or fallen into decay.

There is an interesting story as to how the *Blindman* got its name. In the days of long ago, a party of Blackfoot Indians while hunting their foe, the Crees, became trapped in deep snow on the banks of the river. It was in the springtime, and they were unable to cross because the ice was breaking up. The Crees had time to escape, and the hunters returned to their home, but not before many of them were afflicted with snow blindness from the dazzling sun. Ever after, they referred to the river as the Blindman.

Sylvan Lake was marked on Thompson's map of 1814 as Methy Lake, and on Palliser's map of 1859 as Swan Lake. When the first settlers arrived in the Red Deer district it was practically an unknown Lake, except to the Indians, to whom it was known as Kena-bik, meaning Snake Lake. They gave it this name, on account of the swarms of green garter snakes around its shores, especially at what was later known as Jarvis Bay. These snakes disappeared with the coming of white men.

An early camper at the Lake recalls taking a walk

along the shore one sweltering hot day and passing, as he had many times before, a small pole shack with a slanting mud roof, standing close to the shore.

To his great amazement, this time the roof presented an attractive green appearance, and although there was not a breath of wind, the roof seemed to be moving.

As he watched, garter snakes started coming down the side of the shack, first one or two, then swarms of them slid down and disappeared leaving the roof as before.

It was the Fulmore family, the first campers at the Lake who suggested the name Sylvan Lake instead of Snake Lake. The name met with favor, and in 1903 when the Post Office was installed the name was officially changed to Sylvan Lake.

Incidentally the early trail of the Red River carts enroute to Rocky Mountain House did not pass by way of Sylvan Lake, but crossed over the Blindman River, then went west by way of Gull Lake.

Burnt Lake received its name from a low smudge of fire which burned continually along its banks, winter or summer. The Indians claimed that the fire had burned for all time.

Evarts was named for Luther Evarts who homesteaded in the district as early as 1900. *Eckville* was named for A. E. T. Eckville, on whose land the first village of Eckville was built. A settler named Bentley

circulated a petition for a Post Office in 1899, and the Post Office and village took his name.

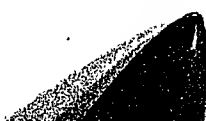
There seems to be no romance connected with the naming of *Leslieville* but the district has an historic spot dating back to the earliest days. The Last Hill, on the farm of Angus Martin, marks an old Indian trail leading to Rocky Mountain House.

Indians always camped on the top of a high hill, to avoid the danger of warlike tribes swooping down on them. They tried to find a hill with a creek and willows at the bottom, so as to provide water and shelter for the horses. This particular camping spot, a day's journey from Rocky Mountain House was called, "The Last Hill," meaning the last camp before reaching their destination.

On the top of the hill, blackened stones indicate the place where the Indians made their camp fires, and a faint trail leading down to the creek and the willows below, shows where the horses found water and shelter.

Rocky Mountain House received its name from the old Fort or Trading Post, built there in 1802. It was called Rocky Mountain on account of the clear view of the mountains from that point, and House, to distinguish it from a tent or teepee, the usual habitation of the wilds.

After the railway came in the people at headquarters decided that Rocky Mountain House was far too cumbersome a name to print in timetables, or on



tickets, so they quietly undertook to change it to Lochearn.

The howl that went up must have been heard clear to Ottawa for every Old Timer was justly indignant. They admitted that the three names made considerable writing, but they felt that the name linked the town with the days of the fur traders and explorers, and makes people remember that Rocky is well over 200 years old.

One of the few residents who favored the change contended that the name was odd, to say the least. His brother had tried to send him a telegram from New York, and had experienced all sorts of trouble before he could make the telegraph people believe there was such a place.

The citizens retorted that they didn't care if New Yorkers did think the name odd, they were keeping it. The railway company pretended that it was just good-natured fun, and that they had never intended to make such a drastic change. For some years the place was listed as Lochearn in the timetables, until that issue was out of date.

The little settlement of *Blackfalds* was first known as Blindman from the Blindman River, and the school took that name. The first Post Office was kept by an early settler named Wagner, and the mail was addressed to Wagner, and the settlement was sometimes called by that name. When the railway came through, they put out a sign at the siding, "Black-



faulds", later shortened to Blackfalds, and the school and the Post Office took that name.

Penhold was also named by the railway company. There was considerable discussion among the settlers as to the choice of a name for the little settlement, but when the railway put out the sign, "Penhold", the discussion ended.



CHAPTER III

Student Missionaries

The Student Missionaries, or Sky Pilots as they were sometimes called, did real pioneering in the early days of the Red Deer district. They filled an important place in the community, helping settlers to retain the finer things of life, and to realize that God ruled, even in their crude surroundings. Owing to the shortage of ministers and the wherewith to support a qualified Minister, these young men volunteered for missionary service in the West when the College term ended in the spring, returning again to their studies in the fall. They were paid a small pittance by the Mission Board, and for the balance, had to depend on their far-flung mission field, which, before the railway arrived extended north to Edmonton, south to Calgary and east and west to the border.

The first Missionaries batched in the little MacPherson shack by the Red Deer Crossing. Mr. Vrooman, the first Methodist Missionary taught the Gaetz children in all-day sessions at their home, thus paying for his meals. The next Methodist Missionary Mr. Dickenson taught the Gaetz children music, to help eke out a living. Mr. A. E. Neilly, the first Presbyterian Missionary to be stationed at the Crossing, taught the McClelland children during the two summer months, taking his meals with the McClellands.

These young Missionaries were often the butt of a good-natured joke. Mr. Vrooman arrived at the Crossing School house to hold service one Sunday, only to find a ball game in progress. He was invited to take a part, which he consented to do, providing the lads would all come to church at the close of the game. The bargain was kept on both sides.

In the spring of '88, James Buchanan, later Rev. Jas. Buchanan D.D., a Student Missionary of the Presbyterian Church stationed at Poplar Grove (Innisfail) made his way up to Dr. Gaetz's homestead at Red Deer. As he wished to make arrangements to preach at the Crossing school house on Sunday, Dr. Gaetz sent his nephew Tom Gaetz, a young lad recently out from Nova Scotia, to drive Mr. Buchanan to the Crossing to make his plans. They started out with a pair of cayuses and a wagon, no doubt the most up-to-date conveyance the farm boasted. Now Tom dearly loved a joke, and never let an opportunity to play a prank pass by. Here was a situation just to his liking, a young, "green Englishman", as new-comers from the Old Country were called, and a Parson to boot. The old trail to the Crossing ran fairly close along the river bank, and shortly before reaching the lower flat, at one place it descended almost perpendicularly. At the top of the hill Tom let the lines go slack and let out a war whoop, and the horses began to run. The young man got down in the bottom of the box and held on to the side. Tom continued to shout, and while the wagon box swayed from side to side



the poor man thought his time had come. At the foot of the hill, Tom spoke quietly to the horses, drew up the reins and they slowed down to a quiet trot. Mr. Buchanan was a good sport and realized that the joke was on him.

Walt MacDonald, one of the early homesteaders in the Clearview district was known as "the teller of tall tales." It might not be a true story, but he could always make a good story of it. He always had time to visit and swap yarns with anyone who chanced along, but he had one pet aversion, and that was women. Perhaps one of the fair sex had jilted him at some time, who knows? The Student Missionary serving that district had been told that he must call at least once on everyone within his field, regardless of denomination, and, in the course of time he got around to call on Walt. He was rather doubtful as to the reception he would receive, for he had been given to understand that Walt didn't hold much with Ministers. However, he was hospitably received and invited to stay for supper, an invitation which he accepted readily, thinking it might give him an opportunity to get in a good word.

Walt went to the pickle barrel and got out a piece of sow belly, which he cut into thick slices. Now, there was no screen door on the shack, and the hens kept beating a tattoo on the earthen floor with their stubs of feet, which had been frozen the previous winter. As the pork sizzled and the potatoes fried, the young Minister kept chasing out the hens and beating

off the flies, and he wondered just how wise he had been in accepting the supper invitation.

As the supper progressed, they talked about the weather, the crops and all the neighborhood news, but there seemed no opportunity to say anything of a personal nature. The young man felt that he should not leave without saying something of an up-lifting nature, and he looked around for something to give him a lead. Not knowing of Walt's aversion to women, and seeing the great need of a woman's touch in the home, he said, "Man was not meant to live alone." "No", said Walt, "he should have another man living with him."

The Minister did not pursue the subject further.

One young Student Missionary related a harrowing experience he met up with on his mission field. Early one morning he started out to make a pastoral call on settlers a good distance from his home base. It was a fine day for a ride, and he met several interesting people, so that the day passed quickly, and when he started on the return trip he realized that he was a long way from home and night not far off.

In order to save time he decided to cut across country, but he found more settlers' fences than he had anticipated, and in finding his way around he lost his bearings. However, as darkness settled in, he saw the light from a settler's shack and turned his horse in that direction.

The young man who met him at the door seemed very much pleased to see him, and invited him to



stay for supper. When he learned of the Minister's predicament, he insisted that he stay the night.

During the evening they chatted about this and that, and it was late when they turned in for the night. The young homesteader went to sleep at once, but the night was warm, the two small windows of the one roomed shack tightly closed, and the Minister could not sleep. He was worried too, about his horse, and he wished he had insisted on picketing him out himself.

Finally, he decided he would slip quietly from the bed, step outside and get a breath of air, and at the same time, make sure that his horse was safely tethered.

Closing the door carefully behind him, he stood for a minute enjoying the fresh air. The night was very dark, and he listened for the munching of his horse nearby, but not a sound could he hear.

Then, he did hear a sound, the sound of a picket rope being dragged through the tall grass. As he feared, the horse had been insecurely tethered and was slowly feeding, no doubt heading towards home.

Low brush ran along in front of the shack, and crouching down, the Minister skirted the brush, keeping close to the house, and managed to slip up on the horse and grab the rope.

Not until he had the horse securely tethered, did he realized how scantily he was clad. He also became aware of the thistles and sharp stones cutting into his bare feet.

However, he was close to the shack and he made his

way quietly to the door, his bare feet making no noise on the soft grass. He turned the door knob very quietly and pulled, but to his surprise the door did not open. Thinking that it had stuck, he put his knee to the door, gave it a hefty push and the knob a jerk, but still nothing gave. To his surprise a quavering voice issued the warning, "Don't try to break in, I have a gun and I can shoot."

The intruder quickly explained his presence on the outside of the door, and it was a very embarrassed young man who threw the door open. It transpired that the homesteader had been startled from his sleep, and on rushing to the window, saw a crouching man, slip along the side of the house. In his fright he completely forgot about his recent bedfellow.

Before coming to the West he had read a good many books about the "Wild and Wooly West," and the man who helped him build his shack spent every evening telling him of the menace of the wild Indians roaming around, ready to scalp a new-comer on sight. The Indians, he anticipated, would be a far greater menace to him than grasshoppers, drought, frost, or any of the elements of nature.

When he saw a man furtively running along the side of the shack, he thought, "this is it." Rushing to the door, he shot home the bolt and grabbing up the poker, the only weapon he could find, he stood ready to defend himself and his home.

The young men had a hearty laugh over their night's episode, and a friendship was struck up which grew with the years.



Joseph Cole, with his wife and family, homesteaded in the Springvale district in 1890, and their home was a favorite stopping place for the Student Missionaries. Here they were assured of a warm welcome, a good meal and congenial company. Mrs. Cole was a provident woman, and always able to set a good table. One particular occasion when the Minister called, Mrs. Cole had done herself proud, and the table fairly groaned under the weight of the good things provided. After everyone was seated at the table and Grace had been said, Mrs. Cole suddenly discovered that she had forgotten to bring the butter from the cellar. Like most country homes of that day, the cellar was reached through a hatch in the floor, which in this case was directly under the table. Everyone had to get up from the table, which had to be moved aside before Mrs. Cole could descend to its depth for the butter. Mrs. Cole described this as her "most embarrassing moment."

One of these early Ministers was particularly concerned about the strangers coming in, feeling lost and lonely, and he always tried to get in touch with them and find out if he could assist them in any way.

There was one young woman who had been to church a few times, seemingly a stranger, but she always managed to get out of the church before he had a chance to shake hands with her.

However, after one evening service he managed to reach the door first. He shook hands with her and asked her the usual questions. "Yes, she was a new-comer. She was Dutch and had only been out from

Holland six months. She hadn't met many people and she was very lonely. She had been to church a few times, but no one had spoken to her."

"Well," said the Minister, "I'm very sorry if my people have not been as friendly as they should be. I'd like to call on you myself. Suppose I come to see you on Tuesday afternoon?"

She replied, "Oh no indeed sir, thank you, thank you kindly sir, but I've already got a feller."

The Indians of the district were very hospitable, and if a settler called near meal time he was sure to be asked for supper, or at least for tea, and a refusal to accept this invitation would have been considered an insult.

They were in no ways backward in calling at the homes of settlers expecting to be fed, and if they found the settler hospitable, they were sure to return within the next few days accompanied by anywhere from two to six of their friends or relatives, expecting, of course, to be fed.

One day when the Student Missionary was out riding, he came to an Indian teepee and he thought he should make a call. The woman was alone at the time, and she invited him to stay for tea, an invitation which he was loath to accept, but did not dare refuse.

Into a pan the woman put flour, some baking powder and a little salt, and with this she sat down on the floor, or ground according to Indian custom. With a flat stick she proceeded to mix up bannocks, or beaver's tails as they were called by the Indians.



Indian women didn't have such modern conveniences as bread boards, but this woman wore buckskin leggings, and as her feet were stretched out before her, the leggings were conveniently placed to be used as a kneeding board.

She had long willow sticks the size and length of walking canes, and when the dough was sufficiently stiff to be kneeded, she broke off a junk, put a little flour on the leggings, and after kneeding the dough well, she stuck the lump on the end of a stick, then worked it down to the shape of a beaver's tail.

The open fire, of course, was in the middle of the teepee, and as each tail was made ready she pushed the pointed end of the stick into the ground near the fire. As one side got toasted, she turned it around to toast the other side.

She only made a few beaver tails on this occasion, but she informed the Missionary that when her husband and sons would return a little later she would have to make enough to completely encircle the fire.

The Missionary said they would have been quite tasty, had it not been for the thought of the extra flavoring added by way of the buckskin leggings.

CHAPTER IV

Farming

The Red Deer District received publicity as an outstanding agricultural district at a very early date. In 1881, the Marquis of Lorne and his Consort, Princess Louise toured the West by buckboard, and on their return to the East, spoke of the Red Deer district as "God's Country."

In 1883, Rev. Leonard Gaetz D.D., made a prospecting trip through the West. He was met at Medicine Hat, the end of the steel, by Chief Factor Hardisty of the Hudson's Bay Company, who drove him north to Edmonton and Sturgeon Creek. Of all the vast country he traversed, none appealed to him like the Red Deer district, which he called the "Park Country". On his return East he lectured on the resources and opportunities awaiting settlers in this Western country, referring to the Red Deer district as "These gardens of the desert—these unshorn fields, boundless and beautiful."

In 1883, George Beatty and Bill Kemp cultivated six acres of land on the Beatty Flats", and in '84, they planted it to wheat, from which they reaped a bounteous harvest. It happened that Bill Kemp's father lived at Chicago, and Bill sent him a sample of the wheat, just to show him what could be grown in the Red Deer district. The father, evidently thought it an outstanding sample, for he entered it in the World's

Fair, which met at Chicago that fall. Much to the surprise of everyone, especially to the two young bachelors, it won first prize in its class.

After settlers got established in the district and began to get returns from their land, they realized that they must have an outside market for their produce if they were to make progress. In '86, Dr. Gaetz journeyed to Ottawa to lay the claims of the Western people before the Government, and to agitate for a railway from Calgary north. He took with him nine samples of oats weighing 53 lbs. to the bushel. He interested Sir John Carling, Minister of Agriculture, with his description of the wonderful resources of the country. The samples taken to Ottawa completely swamped samples which had been brought over from Scotland, as a standard for Canadian wheat.

In the early days, Norman Stewart, then a young lad, sent to the Experimental Farm at Ottawa and got a two pound sample of Lagoda wheat. He sowed it on his father's farm at Penhold, broadcasting it by hand. He cut it with a cradle, bound it by hand and threshed it with a flail, cleaning it with a fanning mill. When the Red Deer Agricultural Society held their first Fair in '92, he entered a sample of his wheat which took first prize.

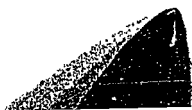
In '93, Dr. Gaetz was appointed by Senator Perley, Commissioner for the Territories, as his assistant to instal the exhibit of Alberta at the great Columbian Exposition at Chicago. Here he designed and decorated the Alberta Grain Trophy which won from the Board of American Commissioners a diploma endorsed

by the Director General. Dr. Gaetz took with him samples of grain grown at Red Deer, among them a sample of the Lagoda wheat grown by the youthful exhibitor Norman Stewart, and again it took first prize in its class.

In recent years, the faith of the Pioneers in the possibilities of the Red Deer district has been justified. In 1947, S. J. Allsop was named wheat King for North America, when his sample of Reward hard spring wheat was picked the best of 3,000 entries at the International Hay and Grain Show at Chicago. Mr. Allsop repeated his win the following two years. He also won first at Toronto in 1948. The grain was grown on the farm chosen as a homestead by Mr. and Mrs. Chris. White in the fall of '85.

Many other agricultural awards of high merit have come to farmers in the Red Deer district in recent years.

The early settler, as soon as he got part way established on the homestead, turned his attention to building a root house or dugout, which took the place of a basement or cellar under the house. If possible he selected a site on a hillside, and, with pick and shovel, dug out a place resembling a small cellar. This was roofed over with poles, covered with straw and again with earth. A double entrance was made, and if properly protected vegetables kept firm in this store-room or dugout until early spring. Though somewhat crude, these root cellars served their purpose much better than the modern basements of today.



In the first years of settlement in the district, there was abundance of rain and gardens put in on breaking did particularly well. To help out with their grub stake, most homesteaders managed to put in a big garden, particularly a good big potato patch. There was plenty of wild game and no shooting restrictions; so with lots of meat and potatoes they were in no danger of going hungry.

In the fall of 1892, there was a very heavy fall of snow, coming early before the ground was frozen or the potato crop harvested. Fortunately the snow remained without melting all winter, and when the white blanket was removed in the spring, the ground was still unfrozen and the settlers harvested a good crop of potatoes. The heavy carpet of snow had kept them quite unharmed through the long winter months.

Oats was the main crop grown by the early settlers, and, with the constant rains, a good crop they had, too. There was no outside market for grain; but there was always a chance of selling oats to in-coming settlers or to the freighters for the bull teams.

The arrival of the four horse stage coach en route from Calgary to Edmonton was an event in the lives of the settlers. Besides bringing mail, the stage carried passengers, and there was always a chance that someone might be returning from a trip to the outside world, or that a settler might be coming in, bringing news from "back home."

In addition to mail and passengers, the stage coach carried "permit kegs," which were anxiously antici-

pated at some points. The Territories was under the Scott Act; but those who so desired could get a permit to send outside for their thirst quencher, which was brought in by stage coach. There was probably not much demand for these in the Red Deer District. The settlers were like one big family, and Dr. Gaetz, a staunch temperance advocate, was a strong force in the community. If any of the settlers had a consuming thirst, they would, in all probability, have been persuaded to quench that thirst at the Red Deer river.

Along the route from Calgary to Edmonton, the stage had different places where relay horses were kept. A Metis family named Anderson living close to the Blindman crossing, east of the present traffic bridge, kept stoppers and also kept the relay horses. The stage on the way north or south stopped there for the night, changed horses in the morning and took with them enough oats for the horses to continue the journey. As the horses had to be kept stabled and fed oats to keep them in shape, they consumed a fair amount.

During his first years in the country, Dr. Gaetz found a market for his surplus oats with Mr. Anderson. One member of the Gaetz family has a bad hand scar, as a reminder of one of these trips delivering oats.

Three wagons were loaded with oats, and, owing to the scarcity of boxes, one wagon was floored with planks and the sacked oats loaded on. This young lad of the family, having reached the ripe age of ten years, was allowed to man the lightly loaded wagon.

All went well until they approached the Blindman

crossing. Going down the incline the planks slipped ahead against the rumps of the horses and they ran away, throwing the lad and injuring his hand.

Knowing they were coming to a country where, for several years they would have to make do with what they brought with them in their car of settler's effects, most of our first settlers planned to bring only the things most useful. Provisions for at least six months were a "must."

Mrs. Joseph Cole was very fond of her garden, and she just couldn't picture a home on the prairies without flowering shrubs and small fruits. Her husband assured her that there would be no room in the car for roots, and they probably wouldn't grow in the Red Deer District anyway.

But Mrs. Cole managed to slip a box in. She reasoned, "You just don't have to tell the menfolks everything." They grew and flourished, and, through the years, her roots of black and red currants, rhubarb and flowering shrubs were divided and shared with neighbours.

When Dr. Gaetz came in '84, he brought with him a year's provisions. He also brought a small grist mill, which, as soon as wheat was grown on the homestead, ground flour for the family. We are told that the flour was very coarse and dark; but the bread was very appetizing and most nourishing.

CHAPTER V

Politics

It was some time after the railway reached Red Deer until the hamlet had any form of government. In 1894, and yearly thereafter, a public meeting was called, a chairman and secretary appointed from among those present, and a certain amount of government agreed on. An Overseer, R. M. Pardoe, was appointed to act without remuneration, and assigned the duty of collecting a tax of two mills on the dollar.

In '96, Wm. Springbett took over as Overseer, and in '97, the hamlet had so much money on hand that they decided to pay the overseer a salary of \$10 yearly and dispense with tax collections that year. The amount of taxes levied that past year had been \$126.76, and the balance on hand after meeting expenses was \$40.35. In 1900 a motion came before the meeting that the auditor be paid the sum of \$5; but the motion was lost. Taxpayers did not deal in big business or spend with a lavish hand in these early days. Red Deer was incorporated as a town on June 20th, 1901, when a Council was appointed with Ray Gaetz as mayor.

Until Alberta became a province it was a part of the North West Territories, and was represented by one member. People in those days took their politics very seriously. There was only two parties, Liberal or Grit, and Conservative, or Tory. Women, of course, had

no vote. They were the silent partners. A man was either a dyed in the wool Liberal, or a dyed in the wool Conservative, depending usually on the politics of his father. From the time the election call went forth excitement ran high. Men who had been bosom friends became avowed enemies until after the election was over, when all differences were forgotten.

In 1896, the late Hon. Frank Oliver was the Liberal candidate for Alberta in the Territorial election. In the course of his campaign work, he was holding a meeting at Pine Lake, and while the crowd was gathering, the political discussion became quite heated. In the midst of the argument a hot-headed Conservative shouted, "a Tory I was born, and a Tory I will die, and if I thought there was any Grit blood in this little finger, I'd cut it off." Mr. Oliver, who was always quick on the come-back, retorted, "It's too bad there isn't some Grit blood in your head."

When this election was held about a dozen voters in Willowdale were pretty much all Liberal, and the same number of voters at Pine Lake, where the poll was to be held, were pretty much all Conservative. It was in the spring, when farmers were extra busy and the trail to Pine Lake was almost impassable, and it looked as if the Willowdale settlers would not be able to spare the time to negotiate the twelve miles to the poll.

However, the farmers met, a better trail was found, and before noon all the Willowdale settlers arrived by wagon. The result was a tie.


At this election the twins Jim and Fred Gaetz cast

their first vote, though we doubt if they were old enough to vote. On account of the condition of the trails, the trip to the poll and back was a day's journey. However, they were quite convinced that the affairs of the country would go to pot without the support of this, their first vote. Neither had questioned the other as to how he was voting, each taking it for granted that the other was voting his way.

When they returned home towards evening, cold and weary, they were very much chagrined to find that the affairs of the country would have run just as smoothly had they remained at home. One had voted Grit and the other Tory.

When Alberta was declared a province in 1905, the burning question was, "where will the capital be placed." Since Calgary was already the hub of civilization and the centre of much activity, the people of Calgary claimed the capital should be placed there. Edmonton, as the Gateway to the North, a vast undeveloped country with untold resources, claimed the right to the Capital. Red Deer, betwixt and between, claimed that they offered the most central location for the Capital.

When Alberta became a province it was divided into ridings for election purposes, and for the first time voters in the Red Deer constituency were given the privilege of electing a candidate for the Provincial House. John T. Moore was the Liberal candidate, running against Dr. Leonard Gaetz. The slogan of the Liberal party at that time was, "Vote for Moore and get the capital for Red Deer." We voted for



Moore; at least the majority voted that way, but we didn't get the capital for Red Deer.

Since voters were few and far between, and there were few newspapers in circulation, candidates did a lot of personal canvassing. Bill Botterill, then a comparatively young man, had a high stepping team of drivers, and, since he was a "dyed in the wool" Conservative, he volunteered to drive Dr. Gaetz on some of his campaign work.

Towards the close of a hard day's driving they came to the home of Frank Hueppelheuser. Now Mr. Hueppelheuser was quite frank in admitting that he was voting for the Liberal candidate; but they were hospitable people and the men were invited to put up their team and stay for supper and the night.

They were only six miles from Red Deer, but with darkness approaching and the mud hub deep, six miles was a long journey and the men were pleased to accept the invitation.

The bed where they slept that night had a great thick feather mattress, the kind where you sink down out of sight, the height of comfort compared with the straw mattress, used so much at that time. Mr. Botterill recalls that Dr. Gaetz slept on his back in the middle of the bed, slept soundly and snored the night through, while he perched on the edge of the bed with never a wink of sleep all night.

Dr. Gaetz was a big man, big of stature, big of heart and big of hand. In recent years, Linton Gaetz, son of the late Ray Gaetz, was looking over the Old Timer's Hut in Calgary when he met there an elderly

gentleman, an Old Timer. When this man found that Linton was from Red Deer, a member of the Gaetz clan, he was much interested.

"Why," he said, "Dr. Gaetz performed the ceremony when I was married at Red Deer in 1885. According to the custom of the day, I gave him a five dollar bill. After the service, when he reached out his hand to say goodbye, in the palm of his hand was the bill that I had given him. 'Here,' he said, 'take this, you'll need it.'"

"I have always remembered the return of the money with gratitude, for I did need it very badly; but what really stands out in my memory is the great size of the man's hand, so unlike the usual hand of a minister."

"Well," said Linton, "that's easily explained. Grandfather raised six stalwart sons, and I've been given to understand that during their tender years they required frequent paddling. That hand grew big from constant exercise."

Red Deer did not make much progress during the first ten years of its existence. Mrs. Frank McBride, a city school teacher, came to Red Deer as a bride in '92, and on the way west, she anxiously enquired about her future home. To her frequent questions her husband always replied, "Well, it's a good town."

"Has it any sidewalks?" she asked.

"Oh yes, it has sidewalks," he replied.

When they got off at the flag station at Red Deer she looked around at the few scattered buildings, the grass growing high in the streets and wild bush most everywhere and she asked, "But where is Red Deer?"

"Why here it is," he replied, as he pointed to the business buildings.

"But where are the sidewalks?" she asked.

In reply, he pointed to the high platforms fronting the places of business.

However, a sidewalk was built in '95 from the station to the Smith and Gaetz store (old Legion Blk.), and a year-later another was built from the Alberta Hotel (Buffalo) to the Queen's Hotel (Arlington). These board sidewalks were built very high, and provided an excellent seat for those who wished to discuss politics or other world questions.


Angus Martin Sr., a grand old pioneer of the Ridge-wood district was an avowed Liberal or Grit, and never missed an opportunity to argue on the subject when he met up with a man holding opposite views. When he came to Red Deer for groceries, he usually met up with his friend Dr. Collins, a radical Conservative, or Tory, and an argument invariably ensued.

Like most of the pioneer men of the district, Mr. Martin chewed tobacco, and Dr. Collins was usually waiting for him when he emerged from the grocery store with a fresh plug of tobacco. He would bite off a liberal chew, and then the argument commenced. Before he could do that chew justice, he was obliged to spit it out in order to give emphasis to what he had to say. In his excitement, he would continue biting off tobacco and spitting it out unchewed all through the argument. When they brought it to a conclusion, his plug of tobacco would have disappeared and he hadn't even had a chew.

The argument at first started mildly; but as it progressed, their voices would rise higher and higher until both men were shouting. In the meantime, they would part and stamp away in different directions, shouting and gesticulating with their hands, then return in the same manner. The doctor was a very tall, elderly man, and, in the horse and buggy days he may have found that "shank's horses" were overly worked, perhaps resulting in calloused feet. At any rate, he was the first to sit down on one edge of the sidewalk; then Mr. Martin sat down on the opposite side, and sitting back to back they would continue the argument.

Finally, the doctor would get so wrathful that he would jump up on the side walk, stamp his feet, shout some adjectives not printable, then stamp away. He would only go a short distance when he would think of something else to add to the argument, and he would return to the fray, stamping his feet, waving his hands and shouting his opinion of the liberal party. He would sit down again with his back to his opponent and the argument would continue in the same spirited fashion.

The doctor would usually get wrathful and leave several times, but he was loath to be the first to drop out of the argument. Finally, the men would run out of adjectives, or their voices would give out and they were obliged to part for the time. The next time they met, the subject of politics was sure to come up and the same procedure would be enacted again, much to the amusement of the small urchins who gathered round.



CHAPTER VI

Bachelors

The Red Deer district in the early days got its quota of "green Englishmen," young men from the cities altogether unused to farm life and conditions as they existed in Alberta.

Among these was Douglas Gregson. Arriving in Calgary in 1885, he purchased an outfit, and, decked out in true cowboy style, he proceeded on the long trek north in search of a homestead.

All went well until evening came, when he was faced with the problem of unharnessing the team, something that he had never seen done. However, he was a resourceful chap, and he managed it by unfastening every buckle in sight.

Come morning, he was faced with even a more difficult problem, that of putting the harness together again. That too, he managed and was finally on his way. He had started out from Calgary with a new pair of riding boots, and he was obliged to wear them four days, until told by a nine year old lass that if he would wedge his heel between the spokes of the wagon wheel and pull, that would do the trick.

He found land to his liking with trees, hills and river, at the junction of the Blindman and Red Deer rivers, and here he pitched his tent and later built himself a fine stone house. He was the first white settler in the district that later became known as Burbank.

He became an adept trapper, his coyote trap line extending 20 miles down the river, and he visited them on skates during winter. When he caught a live coyote and the skin was not in its prime, he picketed it out on a wire leash and fed it well until the hide was right for killing.

One of his sources of income was that of catching fleas. These he sent to a wealthy man in England who made a hobby of collecting fleas, and was prepared to pay a good price for rare specimens. When he shot an animal, he covered it over with a white sheet, and as the animal heat left the body the fleas left also, and it was not too difficult a task to entice them from the white sheet into the neck of a bottle.

He became an expert shot, and of the twenty or thirty bears he shot around the Blindman, he said he only killed one that came to life again.

He had butchered an animal and had the carcass hanging from a tripod near the back door. It was late dusk when he noticed a black animal nosing around it, and thinking it a black cow he went out to drive it away. To his surprise he found it was a big black bear, standing ready to dispute ownership of the meat.

He rushed into the house, got his gun and shot the bear. After examining it and making sure that it was quite dead, he went into the house, laid down his gun and returned with a sheet to cover over the bear for the catching of fleas.

He had spread the sheet over the bear and was in the act of tucking it in, when the bear leaped to all fours, then to his hind legs ready for battle.



Mr. Gregson lost no time in getting to the house; but when he returned with his gun, the bear had left for parts unknown.

Perhaps one of the most memorable episodes in the pioneer experience of Douglas Gregson was the trip he took into the mountains with his two nieces, girls of fifteen and seventeen. The two sisters had come out from England to visit their uncle, and he thought it would interest them to experience something of Alberta in the raw.

Expecting to be away for three months, they left Banff with a good stock of provisions in Sept. 1905, travelling north 90 miles through the mountains.

James Brewster had supplied them with 30 horses, and among them was a donkey they called Barney. Barney, loaded with the camp stove, proved to be the joker of the outfit. When they came to a fallen tree or other obstruction, the horses would leap over without even jarring the pack load.

Not so with Barney, however. He stood stock still, while the woods resounded with the most unearthly sounds, "he-haw, he-haw."

The pack horses invariably bolted, small animals ran for shelter and the birds in the tree-tops ceased their chatter. There was utter stillness through the forest except for the constant braying, "he-haw, he-haw." Then, all progress halted, while a trail was cut over, or around for Barney.

Ninety miles north of Banff, they pitched their tents in a lovely valley in the hills, beside a mountain stream not realizing until it was too late that the mountain

passes behind them had filled with snow, making it impossible for them to get out. They built a cabin out of native stone, roofing it with flat stone.

Food was the major problem for a time, until a cougar killed a deer and they had meat. They had taken in 600 lbs of flour and other provisions, and for the most part, they lived off the land and lived well, if roughly. For Christmas dinner the menu was trout, ptarmigan, mountain sheep and plum duff; for New Years grouse, deer and porcupine. There was usually a good supply of squirrels. They had the usual mountain campers troubles with pack rats. They wore out their clothing; but the girls proved clever with their needles and like all pioneer women, made use of flour sacks.

Towards spring, the water flooded their comfortable cabin and they were obliged to take to the tents. They came out happy and well, just before Easter, after spending nearly eight months in the wilds. The horses had found lots of food on the flats and came out fat. As for Barney, they left him behind to go, eventually where all good donkeys go. They had trapped and procured lots of fur, lynx, pink ermine and others, as well as enough fleas to buy them each a western saddle.

Most early settlers in the Red Deer district were jolly young bachelors, foot-loose and fancy free, Almost without exception, however, they were working hard to establish a home which they hoped to share with the girl of their choice in the not too distant future.

Not so with our neighbour Abe, though. He was a man getting past his youthful days, an unsociable chap who didn't mix with others or take any part in what went on around him. His sole interest seemed in getting ahead, so as to pile up the dollars, and to this end he worked early and late.

One day Abe came over for eggs, and as I was counting them out I advised him that he should keep a few hens, enough to supply him with eggs. He explained that with his field work, his chores and getting his meals, he worked from early morning till long after dark, and he had no time to look after hens.

"What you really need," I added, "is a wife to look after the house and help you with the chores.

"Na indeed," he replied, "I'm not agoin' to keep any man's darter."

"Well you know," I replied, "It's all in the way you look at it."

As Abe prepared to go he turned to my husband and remarked, "Did you know that Ken Trasov has got himself a woman,"

"I didn't know that," said my husband. "What kind of a wife did Ken get?"

"Well, I don't rightly know," replied Abe, "I never saw her, but I do know that she's just a terribly extravagant woman."

"How could you know that if you haven't seen her?" I asked.

Abe replied, "I know by the pile of cans at her back door. You can always tell if a man has an extravagant

woman by the size of the pile of cans at her back door."

After Abe had gone, I went out and viewed the pile of cans at my back door, and I had to admit that it was quite a sizable pile. I dug a hole and buried them deep and covered them well, and in the future, when I opened a can, I saw that it did the disappearing act. I was quite a new bride, and I didn't want Abe telling around that my husband had got himself "just a terribly extravagant woman."

Every district has its odd, or eccentric characters. John Eagle, of Rocky Mountain House might be so classed. When he took up his homestead, he built his bachelor's shack high up in the tree tops. Laying poles across from the branch of one tree to another, he built a platform such as the Indians built in the early days, when they were on the war path and wanted to find a resting place for their dead.

On this platform, John Eagle built a shack which he occupied for some years.

Many theories were advanced as to why he built his home on this high perch. Some thought he was a fugitive from justice, and wanted to make sure that if he was to be apprehended, he would not be caught unaware.

This theory has been shattered however, for John Eagle has lived in the vicinity of Rocky for a good many years, and he is quite a law-abiding citizen.

Before coming to Rocky, John Eagle was not a land-lubber, but a sailor of the high seas. It may have been that the swaying of his tree-top home reminded him

of his former life and helped to dispel the loneliness.

Perhaps again, he had a desire to emulate his namesake the eagle, or, he may simply have had a perchant for tree-top homes, for he built several huts, high up in the trees.

Rocky Mountain House had another odd character, odd in more ways than one. Silas Vandermark, in a land where logs for building were most plentiful and there was firewood to no end, lived for many years in a dugout, which was approached through a tunnel. When one dugout got uninhabitable, as we can quite understand it might, he simply dug himself another.

He had an income, no one seemed to know how much, which came to him from holdings in the United States. Once a month he would take a grubby old sack, trudge to town, draw his money and buy his groceries. With the sack of groceries over his back he would walk home.

He cultivated a small patch of potatoes for his own use, and he usually kept a pig during the summer months, butchering it in the fall for his winter meat. Without the formality of scalding or washing, he hung the pig up in the trees, and when he wanted meat he went out and hacked off a bit.

Finally, he decided that it was too much trouble to go outside for his meat. He had a big sow which he enticed through the tunnel into his dugout, killed it with an axe and let it lay. There was his meat close to hand.

At one time, he didn't come to town for his monthly groceries. Neighbors were not in the habit of drop-

ping in on him, and no one had seen him about. A kind hearted neighbour went to his dugout and found him desperately ill. He managed to get him to crawl out through the tunnel and got him to the hospital.

The doctor thought he would probably die from shock when given a good bath and cleaning up. He survived the ordeal; but the Good Samaritans who had to administer the bath pretty nearly didn't.

He did eventually die in his dugout, and the police had a terrific time getting the body out through the tunnel.

After his death, it was said that people prowled around his diggings, in search of buried treasures. However, they never found anything; or if they did they considered that "finders were keepers" and kept mum.

CHAPTER VII

Fun and Frolic

The early settlers of the West were bound together in close bonds of friendship, for they had so much in common that they were like one big family. They all had to "make do" with so little; but they accepted that part of their new life cheerfully, for they were not alone in their difficulties and hardships. Each man knew that his privations were shared by others, and the sharing made the burden lighter.

They banded together to make their own fun, and a good time they had too, judging by the glint in the eyes of an Old Timer when these bygone days come up for discussion. They learned to fashion happiness out of whatever material was on hand.


During the summer, one of the favourite pastimes on Sunday afternoon was to go for a walk, exploring the country. After the traffic bridge across the river was built in 1892-93, it was somewhat of a novelty for a time, and Sunday strollers often wended their way in that direction.

One Sunday afternoon, Mrs. H. G. Stone was alone, and another young couple, Mr. and Mrs. Frank McBride invited her to go for a walk with them, and they started out on their usual walk across the bridge. North Red Deer at this time was covered with a growth of willow and saskatoon bushes, a favourite camping ground for the Indians. As they neared the

north end of the bridge they noticed a smoke and quite a commotion around an Indian camp, and they walked on to see what the excitement was about.

Indians seldom let a campfire get away from them, for all too often they had experienced the dire results of such carelessness. In some way, a spark from the noon fire had started a fire in the dry grass, and with one exception, every man, woman and child, armed with a gunny sack, old coat, or whatever they could lay their hands on, was frantically beating at the flames. One big buck, naked to the waist, stood watching the others. Evidently he had given all his spare clothing to the workers. At last, realizing that his help was urgently needed, he whipped off his only remaining garment, his pants, and joined in the fray. The ladies did not wait to see the outcome of the fire.

After John Burch bought out the Trading Post at the Crossing, they often held dances in their big dining room, where Tom and Mary Lennie had given meals to the freighters. Not many of the early settlers had a room big enough for a dance. Just after Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Cassels arrived in the district, the Burches held a dance, to which everybody was invited. This was the first gathering that Mrs. Cassels had attended since arriving, and she was anxious to make a good impression on her neighbours. She had brought very few clothes with her from the homeland, for she thought the women of Alberta would dress in furs and buckskin, and the clothes that she might bring would be out of place. Her hat looked particularly jaded, and the hired man suggested that she might renew it



with a polishing of shoe blacking, and volunteered to lend his aid. Gaily they set off in the wagon, Mrs. Cassels in her pink dress and black hat shining like new, felt quite happy.

It was not far to the Crossing, as the crow flies, but they had to go quite a way around to reach the ford, and before they got to their destination, a sudden shower came up, drenching them thoroughly. They were delayed somewhat on account of the rain, and the crowd had all gathered when they arrived. Instead of the dignified entrance she had anticipated, Mrs. Cassels arrived with the water pouring from her drooping hat, bringing black rivulets down her face and over her gay pink dress. Mrs. Cassels joined in the laugh with the others, and she felt that after all, her predicament had helped to break the ice.

In the winter time, the river ice was swept off and the young people and young married couples in the Red Deer settlement had a free skating rink. They made a big bonfire, sometimes making a kettle of tea, and gathered around the fire for lunch.

Often a sleigh ride party was arranged, the box of a sleigh filled with hay and they all piled in. After the sleigh ride, they enjoyed a party at one of the homes, very often the Wm. Piper home in the south of town. They played "spin the plate," "forfeits" and guessing games, then lunch and a drive home. Sometimes they enjoyed a few rounds of the "square dance" before leaving for home. Mr. Cuthbertson, living just south of town, supplied the team and sleigh, and often the music. When they held a really high tone dance,

they had Narcisse Marion, a half breed from the Crossing for the "orchestry." He could almost make the fiddle talk.

For a long time the country dance supplied the only opportunity for the people in the sparsely settled districts to get together and visit and swap yarns. Everyone attended, from grandmother and grandfather down to the infant in arms. These dances were usually held during the winter when work on the homesteads was slack, and people went in sleigh loads, sometimes driving ten miles to get there. The bachelors usually rode horseback, but they always went even if they had to walk. They never missed an opportunity to enjoy a lunch prepared by a woman's hand, and besides there was always the chance that a new settler might show up with a marriageable daughter, and that was of real interest to the bachelors.

Usually someone could be found to play the fiddle; if not someone could always be found to play the mouth-organ. The older people visited and looked after the babies while the younger people enjoyed the frolic. The sleeping babies were laid on the bed, and as the evening progressed, other children wearied and were glad to join the babies.

At one of these early dances held near Pine Lake, two young matrons arrived, each with her first born tucked snugly in a clothes basket. One woman put her clothes basket with her sleeping infant safely on a table in the corner of the bedroom, while the other woman placed her basket on the bureau.

The evening progressed with its harmless fun, the

rough board floor bending under the weight of dancing feet as grandmothers and grandfathers with their children and grand-children progressed through the intricate pattern of the square dance. Towards the end of the festivities a boiler of coffee was drawn to the side of the kitchen range and all enjoyed the good things provided by the ladies.

While the women were sorting out cake tins, the mothers looking up overshoes, mittens and coats and getting their sleeping children ready for the drive home, two bachelors took advantage of the confusion to slip into the bedroom, and exchanged the baskets containing the sleeping infants.

When the sleighs drew up at the door, the two mothers rushed into the dimly lighted bedroom, grabbed up a basket from where she had left it and each hurried out to the sleigh, thankful that her darling was sleeping so soundly. Each couple started out on the five mile drive, going in different directions. Lulled by the movement of the sleigh and perhaps by the jingling of the bells, the infants slept soundly all the way home.

Not until the teams were put away, and fires banked for the night did either mother disturb her sleeping baby. Then panic broke out in both homes. The teams were quickly harnessed, and no horse flesh was saved by either father on his way to make the exchange. Each couple must have discovered their mistake about the same time, for the two sleighs met again where they had started out from the party, and an exchange was quickly made.

People were always playing pranks of this sort, and everyone took them in good spirit. They provided something to laugh about and chase away the blues.

CHAPTER VIII

Short Shorts

When the settlers had to make the long trek of one hundred miles to Calgary for provisions, they had to do considerable planning to make their supplies last. With all the work of getting out logs and putting up buildings, getting out rails for fencing, it took time to get the land broken and a garden producing. All the early fences were made of poplar rails. When the settlers got so that they could afford to buy wire to tie the rails to the posts, they felt that they were well away. Boiled beans were used a lot in the early days, either to take the place of potatoes, or as a second vegetable. When boiled and drained, with plenty of pepper and butter added they were very good too. Prairie chickens were very plentiful all the year round, and there were no shooting restrictions. Beans were used to make a prairie chicken stew, and that was said to be really something.

Beans were easily brought in, easily stored and there was no spoilage. If a bachelor was out of bread or other eatables, he could always fall back on beans. A widower in the Pine Lake district lived alone with his twelve year old daughter as housekeeper, and was said to live altogether on beans. One day a couple of men rode to his house looking for strays. He hadn't seen the cattle, but with true Western hospitality, he invited them to stay for dinner. As they were hungry

and their horses as well, they accepted the invitation.

"Laura, Laura," he called to his daughter, "these men are staying for dinner."

"But Dad, there isn't anything for dinner," the daughter replied.

"Well, give them beans, give them beans," advised the father.

"But Dad," wailed Laura, "there isn't any beans. We ate them all for breakfast."

"Well, cook some more, cook some more," admonished the father.

The riders decided that, after all, they had better jog along. The cooking of beans takes time.

For some reason, the story got abroad that the Red Deer district was not suited to pigs, probably that it was too cold, and settlers did not include pigs in the car of settler's effects. This they rued later, for a pig could readily be turned into meat for the table.

At one time Mr. Farley, an early bachelor in the district, went to Calgary and while there got a chance to buy a pig. Although he had nothing with which to feed the pig, this was an opportunity that could not be overlooked. His close friend and neighbour, Alex Morrison was a married man and he milked cows. Mr. Farley took the pig to him, with the understanding that when big enough to butcher, he would get half the pig back.

The months passed on, and one day Mr. Morrison drove up to the Farley home, brought in a half of pig and laid it on the table.

No doubt Mr. Farley looked somewhat taken back,

and his friend said, "Well, you asked me to bring back half of the pig, and this is half."

"Sure," said Mr. Farley. "That's what I said. I've got the half of the pig and that's all right."

He had brought back half of the pig; but instead of cutting it up and down, he had cut it through the middle and brought back the half with the head on. No doubt Mr. Farley would look around for some way to play a return trick.

The coming of the railway meant new settlers, and settlers meant schools, churches, bridges and hospitals. Already two families were settled in the Clearview district, the Chris White family and the Andrew Trimble family when Dan McKinnon arrived with his family in the early spring of '91. Mrs. White was overjoyed to welcome Mrs. McKinnon as a near neighbour, and the two women became close friends. It was a treat to hear them speak reminiscently of their early struggles, on the rare occasion, perhaps at an Old Timers' gathering or at an Institute meeting, when they could be induced to tell some of the interesting happenings, the highlights of the early days. "Do you remember when you performed an operation on your one hen," prompted Mrs. White. "Do I?" chuckled Mrs. McKinnon. "Why, that was one of the real tragedies of those first years." And so, she launched into her story. "I only had one hen, and when Dan told me that your husband had got one of those Buff Cochin hens from the Cooks for you, I was filled with envy. I just couldn't rest until I got some of the eggs. I didn't know how it was going to be managed, for I

knew they didn't want to part with any. I just had one hen and finally she started to set, and I told Dan I just had to have those eggs. He took over some oats, and managed to get some eggs in exchange, and wasn't I pleased. We watched Biddy so carefully, but finally when she was almost due to bring out the chicks, calamity knocked at the door. Dan had poisoned some oats for the gophers and had put the pan up on a beam where he was sure nothing could reach it. By this time, Biddy was hungry, and she was light, too, so she flew up and filled up. She had just descended to her nest, a very sick hen when I found her. I decided it would have to be an emergency operation without an anaesthetic either. I took out those oats, washed out the crop and sewed it up, and she finished the job she had set out to do."

"What did you operate with — your husband's razor?" came the query.

"I have never told that," she twinkled, "but let's hear about Mrs. White's hen story."

"Oh, my story is not as thrilling as Mrs. McKinnon's. You see I had a few hens, but not enough to supply eggs for the family. I used duck eggs in season; but the season was short. I had looked on those Cook hens with envy for some time, but they just wouldn't part with any. They had wanted some carpenter work done, and finally Chris told them he would do the work if they would give him a hen in payment. You see, in those days, people didn't use money among neighbours, good thing too, for we didn't have any. If you did some work, you were paid in potatoes, lum-



ber or whatever was on hand. Wasn't Chris proud when he brought home that hen, and I was even prouder. I saved every egg, and finally we had a hen setting, and Goldie, for that is what the children called her, had laid eleven eggs when she died on the nest. Well, I wasn't going to be done out of that last egg, so I performed an operation, got the egg and placed it with the other eleven under the setting hen. We felt pretty badly about losing Goldie; but we didn't mind so much when the eggs hatched and we had twelve dandy Buff Cochin chicks."

The men did not have any monopoly on the hardships of the early days. Women, separated from family and friends, felt very keenly the loneliness and isolation of a home in a new and untried country. One woman told of her mishap when she went to make her first neighbourly call. At the time it spelt real tragedy, though today she tells the story as if it were a joke.

"I'd been in the country several months and had never seen a woman. The roads were very bad and the trip to town for supplies took a whole day, and someone had to keep the home fires burning. I had a neighbour five miles away, and seeing how lonely I was, one day my husband volunteered to take me over.

"I got out my best hat and clothes, that I had not worn since we left the East, and when we set out in the wagon I felt like a boy going to his first circus, I was so excited. The trail was frightful, but I was so

thrilled at the prospect of chatting again with a woman that I gave no thought to the roads.

"Finally, we came to a mudhole that was the daddy of them all, it was wide and long and deep. When we got to the worst part, the wagon wheels just seemed to sink and sink. The horses pulled and tugged, but the wheels would not budge. My husband coaxed and cajoled them, and they did their best, but their best was not enough.

"Finally, he got out in the deep mud and water, almost to his waist and tried to find some way to pry the wagon up. Then he told me that he would carry me to dry land and I could either walk to the neighbours or walk home, it was two and a half miles either way. He backed up to the wagon and I clasped my arms firmly around his neck, drew up my feet and we were away.

"But alas! A sudden gust of wind came up, and the next thing I knew I was floundering and trying to gain a foothold in the deep mud and water. A sorry looking sight I was, and I thought for a minute my husband was going to leave me there, but wives were very scarce in the West at that time, so he picked me up and walked on until we reached dry land.

"You see, when the sudden wind came up, I thought only of my good hat, and I let go my hand hold. As I picked my way home, muddy and dripping wet, I was glad for once that we had no near neighbours."

Pioneers went through many tragic experiences during their first years in the West. A. Louiselle and his son Louis, the first settlers at Sylvan Lake, brought

with them a saw mill. The country was ideal for this purpose, for heavy timber stretched back in all directions from the Lake, which before the timber was cut was five feet higher than it is today.

On one occasion they were late finishing their day's work, and when they started for the opposite shore, towing a raft behind the motor boat, darkness had set in. It was an intensely dark night, and when they reached the middle of the Lake the motor refused to work and the light went out. They were unable to fix it until morning and were obliged to spend the night in the open boat in the bitter cold.

From their kitchen window the women had watched them make a start, and by means of their light, had followed their progress to the middle of the Lake. When the light disappeared, they were sure the boat had gone down. There were no neighbours or other boats available, and all night long they kept their lonely vigil.

Not until the clouds of darkness had lifted, did they realize that their loved ones were safe.

Cowboys never missed an opportunity of playing pranks on one another, and if perchance a man was a braggart he invited trouble for himself. Bob was in this class, and the boys took a particular delight in putting him to the test.

One day just as Bob got saddled and mounted, a cowboy stepped up to the side of his horse on the pretext of asking him a question, and while talking, he slipped his hand up and unfastened the thongs which secured one end of the slicker to the back of the



saddle. A cowboy always carried a slicker or raincoat over the back of the saddle, tied at each end by the leather thongs of the saddle. It was of lightweight material, treated liberally with oil.

When the cowboy was through talking, or had finished his mischief, he gave the horse a slap on the rump and he was off. With the first jump, the slicker spread out over his rump, and the horse, a nervous animal, was away on high.

In vain Bob pulled on the reins and talked to the horse, but the more he talked the faster the horse went. Bob grasped the horn of the saddle with both hands and held on, while the skirt of the slicker billowed out behind and the frantic horse fairly flew over the ground. John Gilpin never rode a more spectacular race than did Bob that day.

The trail led through a series of hills, and each time the horse emerged from a dip we expected that Bob would come up missing. No doubt the horse had to slacken a bit for the hills, enabling Bob to get a better handhold.

At any rate, the poor horse ran till it could run no more, and Bob was able to retrieve his slicker.

Cliff Braithwaite, who came to the Springvale district with his parents in 1892, recalls that among the interesting characters of the early days were two men named Love. G. A. Love had been a minister and he homesteaded in Willowdale and was known as Love the Saint. The other homesteaded across the divide and was known as Love the Sinner. He was a very broad-talking Englishman.

Neighbours often worked together in these early days, and Mr. Braithwaite went across the divide and put up hay with Mr. Love, with the understanding that he was to get the hay when he wanted it.

They had noticed Mr. Love the Sinner drawing hay past their house towards town, but thought nothing of it. One day Love the Sinner called and said, "Well, I've sold your iye (hay)."

"Well," said Mr. Braithwaite, "you're not a man of your word."

"No," was the rejoinder, "but nobody keeps his word in this country."

Cliff Braithwaite also recalls an amusing incident that happened when he attended the small log school house in Springvale, built in 1897.

An early homesteader in the district, Morton Gray, had spent 5 years mining for diamonds in South Africa. He arrived at the homestead wearing a heavy leather belt in which he carried a dagger. This he continued to wear. He may have thought the dagger gave him added prestige, or he may have kept up the habit for sentimental reasons.

One day he called at the school to enquire of the children if they had seen his oxen, which had strayed. It happened to be recess time, and when they saw him coming an older boy said to the others, "Don't let him get near you or he'll kill you with his dagger."

Mr. Gray never did know why he couldn't get near enough to the children to enquire for his oxen.

The first passenger train reached Red Deer in the spring of 1891. Although there was only one train

from the south a week, and it took seven hours to make the trip from Calgary, it was considered a great convenience and an important step in colonizing the country. The arrival of the train was an event, and people from the surrounding district as well as the people of Red Deer gathered to see the train come in. It might be seven hours late, but when the news went forth, "the train is coming!" all business stopped. Even if a store-keeper was in the midst of serving a customer everything was dropped and the store left unlocked and unguarded while everybody gathered at the box car, which was used as a station house. There was always the chance that a new settler might arrive with news from home.

A few years after the hamlet of Red Deer took shape, a great fire swept down the north side of the river. Driven by a high wind, it swept everything before it. People who experienced the fire, say it was like a great wall of flame, and the roar could be heard for miles. Settlers said it was the most terrifying experience they had ever met up with. Men gathered along the south side, prepared to beat out the flames should it jump the river.

The river bank was fringed with tall spruce, and the flames would shoot up a tree, and when the fire neared the top, the tree would snap like kindling wood and the top go careering off to start another fire. Three times the fire jumped the river, and each time it was beaten out.

While the men kept watch, the women packed their most precious possessions, got their children

ready to flee at a minute's notice and then knelt in prayer.

Fortunately, the wind went down, and after three days of watchful waiting the welcome rain came and the danger was past.

Bears were plentiful in the Red Deer district when the first settlers arrived, both black and brown, but particularly black. They seemed quite harmless however. When bringing in the cows at dusk, it was not unusual to see a bear lurking in the background. When this chore was assigned to the younger members of a family, they always made it a point to get the cows in before dark.

Bears were particularly prevalent in the Shady Nook district, perhaps because of the heavy stands of spruce. This part of the country did not settle very early, for although the land was of the best, homesteaders looked for more open country where the land could more readily be brought under cultivation. A young man homesteaded there in the early 90's, we'll call him Jim. He was a jolly, good-natured chap, always ready to help out a neighbour, but like so many young bachelors without a wife to supply the urge, Jim never did believe in doing a job today, if it could be put off until tomorrow.

He had a calf pen near his back door, and the calves were continually getting out. He always did intend to fix that calf pen tomorrow, but some way it just never got done. With poles to get out for fencing, the fences to be put up, land to clear and break, a homesteader's days were pretty well occupied.

One evening Jim was sitting reading in his one-roomed shack when he heard quite a commotion at his back door. He thought to himself, "those pesky calves have got out again. Tomorrow, I will fix that pen."

He tried to concentrate on his reading, but the trampling and the snuffling continued to annoy him. At last, in exasperation he threw down his book. "I'll teach those calves a lesson," he muttered as he grabbed up the broom.

He jerked open the door, and waving the broom aloft, with a great shout he jumped — almost into the arms of a big black bear, standing on his hind legs ready for all comers.

Jim leaped into the house almost faster than he had leaped out. He bolted the door, turned out the light and jumped into bed, where he covered himself up from the top of his head to the bottom of his boots. According to the story, he lay there in fear and trembling all night long, afraid to turn down the covers for fear bruin should come window peeping. When at last he did venture to turn down the quilts, he was surprised to find that it was broad daylight, with nothing more fearsome than the sun peeping in at the windows. Jim didn't stay to prove up on his homestead.

Somewhere around the 90's, a grizzly bear was shot on the homestead of Wilbert Smith, in the Waskasco district. It is a very unusual thing for a grizzly bear to be found so far from his native haunts. The milk cow failed to turn up for the usual morning's milking, and the reason was quite apparent when tracks of a

grizzly bear were found nearby. Mr. Smith realized that this was not a one-man job, and he jumped on his horse and rounded up help. Men quickly gathered with rifles to corner the bear before he could get away. Besides Wilbert Smith there were his two brothers Joe and Jim, who had homesteads close by, John Burch, an experienced big game hunter who had hunted buffalo with the Indians, Tom Ellis, and perhaps others.

It was Tom Ellis who pushed aside some bushes and first sighted the bear. Having downed his prey in a small draw on the farm, he ate his fill and then laid down for a nap beside the carcass, when Ellis stepped through the bushes and saw him. He stepped back from the bushes and, in his excitement shouted, "here he is boys, here he is," to the men who were close behind, and bruin was asleep no longer, but up on his haunches, ready for battle.

All of the young men had a shot at bruin, or at least in his direction, but it was John Burch, who, in his quiet, unhurried way, stepped through the bushes and sent home the telling shot.

Wilbert Smith had the hide made into a rug for the floor of his home, and until the death of Mrs. Smith in 1945, it was one of her prized possessions.

John Burch had a claw of the bear made into a brooch for his daughter Ada (now Mrs. Snider). It is still treasured by her in her far off home in Florida, keeping fresh in her memory the days when, as a young girl, she enjoyed life around her father's trading post at the Old Red Deer Crossing.

Red Deer has another bear story that Old Timers delight to talk about. It was after the railway came in that a small black cub bear lost his bearings and was found wandering about the north part of the town. Several dogs gave chase and the cub sought safety in a tree, about where the Salvation Army barracks stands today. From this vantage point he looked down on his enemies, secure in the knowledge that dogs cannot climb trees. A crowd quickly gathered. Stones were fired, the tree shaken; but the cub held firm. Then, Beau Gaetz, hearing the hubbub rode over on his cow pony, and in true cowboy style, roped the little fellow. In spite of his protests, he was pulled with the rope and urged on from behind by small boys until they reached Frank McBride's hardware store, where he was put on display in the window.

However he did not prove a very tractable pet, and it became necessary to send him to the happy hunting ground.

CHAPTER IX

Indians—Their Myths and Traditions

Indians and half-breeds were noted for their great longevity, and as an example of this, in the early '80's there lived at the old Blindman crossing an elderly couple named Anderson. The old lady claimed herself to be 113 years old, and judging by the number of children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren under the one roof, this seemed highly probable. She used to relate the story that 100 years previously, when she was a girl of 13 and her brother 11, her people camped on the banks of the Siouris river, near where Brandon now stands. They were attacked by the Sioux Indians, and she and her brother were both shot and became unconscious. The Indians, thinking them dead, crossed the river and carried away their scalps.

After the Indians had left, their mother rescued them and gradually nursed them back to health. The Indians, upon hearing that their victims were still alive, returned the scalps, for it was considered unlucky to keep the scalp of a living person. Mrs. Anderson always wore a small black skull cap to disguise the fact that she had no hair, and until her death carried a bullet in each leg and an arrowhead between her shoulders.

Jim O'Chiese (Green Blow Fly), Chief of the Chippewa Indians of Rocky Mountain House, known

as the old blind chief, died in 1932, at the ripe old age of 107 years. His wife died a few years later at the age of 106 years. She was never ailing a day, but got up from the dinner table and dropped dead.

The old Chief Jim O'Chiese was married twice, and on his death, according to custom, his eldest son John, by his Chippewa wife, became Chief. Yellow Face, son of his Cree wife, was considered Chief by the band of non-treaty Crees living near them, and the Crees look to Yellow Face for leadership. He considered himself as occupying an advisory position.

Henry Stelfox who came to Rocky Mountain House in 1908, has long been the friend and advisor to the Indians, and to show their friendship for him, they call him brother and gave him the name "Oheman Makkesis", meaning Chief Fox, the Fox pertaining to the latter part of his name.

Mr. Stelfox had a good understanding of Indians and their way of life before coming to Rocky Mountain House, for he had spent five years in South Africa, and while there had learned the language of the Basuto Tribe, and was made a blood brother of the Basutos. Their name for him was "Ramosoanyani Ramoulita", meaning Little White Man who sees in the dark.

From the time Mr. Stelfox first came to Rocky, he dealt in furs with the Indians. Other men have come in and tried to strike up a fur trade with them, but it was no go. They said, "No, me trade with my friend Stelfox; he heap good Injun."

Mr. Stelfox has had reason to remember the kind-

ness of the Indians. At one time, when his children were small he was taken very ill. An old Indian was in town and happened to call at the Stelfox home. When he found that his brother was sick, he was very much concerned, and wanted to see him. He asked if there was anything he could do to help; but was told there was nothing. Before he left, Mrs. Stelfox had noticed him with a string measuring the feet of the children, tying knots to indicate the length.

It usually took three days to get to where the Indians were camped and three days return; but in four days from the time the old Indian had paid his visit, seventeen Indian sleighs drew up at the Stelfox home. They again asked if there was anything they could do, and were told there was nothing. They brought with them gifts of buckskin moccasins and gloves for the children, as well as a quarter of moose and venison. They continued bringing gifts as long as Mr. Stelfox was ill.

Now Mrs. Stelfox could not refuse the gifts, for the feelings of the Indians would be hurt. On the other hand, she was reluctant to accept them for she knew that the Indians had need of these things, so she looked around for someone in need with whom she could share them.

In 1909 Mr. Stelfox was instrumental in getting a reserve set aside near Buck Lake for the Stonies who had been pushed out from their old haunts near Pigeon Lake. Ever since that time he has taken a keen interest in the affairs of the Indians. He has refused to sign a contract with the department of

Indian Affairs, but has continued to act without remuneration because the Indians are his friends. He found, however, that it was getting to be a full time job, and recently he told the Indian Agency that they must relieve him. However, he consented to act in an advisory capacity, representing all of the Indians in Alberta. He is also a member of the Government Game Advisory Council.

Mr. Stelfox has long worked to get the Chippewas and a small band of Crees around Rocky, the last band of non-treaty Indians in Canada, placed on a reserve where they would be cared for, and it is largely due to his efforts that they have recently signed treaty.

The Chippewas are, in some ways, quite distinct from other races of Indians. They have no idea from whence they came, or how they entered Canada. Some of the older members of the tribe think from the north, and some again think they came by way of the West Coast. At any rate, they claim to have lived here for all time. They bury their dead in a sitting posture, their knees hunched up and their hands clasped around their knees. Their Chief offers a simple prayer at the graveside.

Recently, a chain of mounds was unearthed in Africa, and under each mound was found a human skeleton, which had been buried in this posture. This would lead to the belief that this band of Indians came from that country.

When asked if these Chippewas are Christians, Mr. Stelfox replied, "Well, if these old Indians are not Christians, there are none in Alberta." He went on

to tell of one winter when he had visited their camp. He knew that the Indians were short of food, and fearing that they might be hungry, he loaded a sleigh with provisions and started for their camp, a day's journey.

As he approached the camp, darkness was closing in. He was about to go to the teepee of Chief Yellow Face when he saw him outside the entrance, with his arms uplifted as if in supplication.

He waited until Yellow Face prepared to go inside, then he approached and asked him what he had been doing. The old man replied, "Every night before I sleep I go outside and look at the clouds, the stars and the skies. Then I thank God for these beautiful things which he has given to us, I ask His blessings on my people, on our King and the people in authority over us. Every morning I go out and look at the beauties of the sunrise, and all nature about me, and again I give thanks for these gifts, and ask his blessings on my people, the King and the rulers of this country."

"These," said Mr. Stelfox, "are the people whom we have driven from their fertile fields and valleys, out into the swamps and muskegs. If they can find it in their hearts to ask God's blessing on us, surely they are Christians."

The old chief Jim O'Chiese was greatly opposed to his people signing treaty. In the past, these people have made their living by hunting and fishing. In the winter, the women tan the hides and make moc-casins, gloves, jackets and novelties, which they sell

to help them over the summer months. In the summer, they wander at will, selling their wares as they go along.

Now, the old Chief, who, according to his reckoning, was born in 1825, could not realize how conditions were changing. He had the welfare of his people very much at heart, and he could not picture them confined within a certain area. Shortly before his death, he called his lesser Chiefs and headsmen together in council, and he said to them: "This is the land that God has given us. This is our heritage, and he has set aside sufficient territory that we may live undisturbed."

After exacting a promise from them that they would not sign treaty, he continued: "It may be all right for two or three of you to take treaty if you think that this is best. Then, you will be in a position to tell the rest of my people if treaty is best for them."

Anticipating the time when they would come into treaty, some years ago Mr. Stelfox was instrumental in getting the Government to hold a tract of 30,000 acres for a reserve, situated north west of Rocky Mountain House and north of the Baptiste river to Nordegg. He also blocked out 70,000 acres of trapping areas, extending west to the banks of the North Saskatchewan and east to the Clearwater Forest Reserve.

Every summer, following the Sun Dance, a council was held to decide the treaty question. The old men, who knew from long years of experience, the discomforts of an empty stomach, were in favor of going

on a reserve; but the young men always voted them down.

However, one part of the advice of the old Chief was followed, and three of the band were induced to take treaty along with another band, and they brought back a favorable report. The Chippewas and Crees around Rocky signed treaty, and more than 100 years of wandering has ended for the last of Canada's nomadic Indians.

Although these Indians are on their reserve, they will still continue holding a Sun Dance in the summer, for that represents to them a great religious festival. The Red Man can foretell the weather better than the Whites, and the Sun Dance is usually held during the rainy season in summer, or when the saskatoons hang purple on the branches. It is similar in its meaning to our religious festivals at Easter or Thanksgiving when they give praise unto God for the blessings they have received. If a member of a family is very ill, the head of the house will sometimes promise God that if the loved one is spared, he will put on a Sun Dance, or he sings songs of praise similar to our Beatitudes.

Apart from his interest in improving the lot of the Indians, Mr. Stelfox had another pet project. For years he had been urging the Government to start a buffalo park in the Clearwater Forest Reserve, as a tourist attraction. Some years ago two buffalo cows and a bull escaped from the Banff Park and were heading towards Rocky Mountain House. Mr. Stelfox

was contacted and told that if he could capture the animals he could have them.

After four days work, with the help of thirty men, the animals were rounded up, loaded during the night into a truck and conveyed to corrals at Rocky Mountain House. They were in a very impoverished condition; but with plenty of feed and good care, Mr. Stelfox soon had them fat and sleek. He kept them for three or four years, and during that time the herd was increased by one calf. He tried in vain to induce the Government to use these animals as the nucleus of a herd for the Clearwater Reserve, which consists of four million acres.

He was eventually obliged to slaughter them because young lads got too much of a thrill from playing wild Indians, and the hides were peppered with shots from a .22 rifle.

We, in our modern homes while away the evening hours discussing the latest books we have read, the music we have enjoyed and the plays we have seen. The Indians, around their flickering camp fires talk of their hunting and fishing trips; but especially do they talk of the brave deeds of their forefathers, the myths and stories of long ago.

They are a people with a very vivid imagination and believe implicitly in the spirit world, and as a story is passed on from generation to generation, no doubt it is considerably embellished by their ready imagination. One of their most interesting tales concerns the loss of a little seven-year-old boy, Jim O'Chiese.

In the long ago days, a party of Chippewas was

camped in the Hand Hills south east of Red Deer. In the late afternoon, one of their men who had been out riding returned and reported a Blackfoot camp on a hill not far away. The Blackfeet had evidently observed the Chippewas and were making preparations to attack.

There was consternation among the little band when they learned that their dreaded enemy was near, and the young people wanted to leave at once. Knowing that Indians always attack just before dawn, the older people said, "No, let us go on as if we did not know that an enemy was near; but let the women pack their things quickly and get ready to move as soon as darkness comes."

As soon as darkness closed in, they stole away through the bushes as quietly as ghosts, anxious to put as many miles as possible between themselves and their enemy before dawn.

About midnight, they stopped to listen and find out if they were being followed. At this time they missed little Jim O'Chiese, whom they thought they had put on a seat on a travois. They thought he might be with some of the other sleeping children who had been taken on ahead, and at any rate, there was nothing they could do about it in the darkness, so they went on.

All night they travelled, making what haste they could. With the coming of daylight they stopped for their meagre breakfast, and then they found that the boy was not with them. They did not know if, in the confusion of breaking camp he had been left behind; or if, in his sleep he had fallen off the travois.

The mother wept and could not be comforted. Two or three of the men went back to search for him, but not a trace could they find of the missing boy. They even returned to where they had broken camp, and spent a week looking over the country in all directions. They decided that the boy had been captured by the Indians.

This was in the early spring, when the white frost was on the ground in the early morning. All summer long the mother mourned for her boy whom she never expected to see again. In the late summer or early fall, an older half-brother of the boy dreamed that he saw his brother on a hill, an unusual hill with a very strange formation. Now the Indians believe very strongly in dreams, they think it is the spirit world speaking, and the following morning the young man told his people of his dream.

He said that he believed that God, through his dream, was telling him that his brother still lived, and if ever he saw that hill he would know it by its peculiar formation, as revealed to him in his dream.

Finally, he got food together and made preparations for the search. After many days travel, late one night he noticed a hill in the distance, and he continued travelling towards this hill until it was quite dark, before making camp.

The following morning when he awoke, the hill was in plain view, and he recognized it as the hill of his dream. He went forward with all haste, and as he reached the crest of the hill, he thought he heard someone crying, and he ran towards the sound. There

he found his long lost brother, very much emaciated; but still alive.

The boy had the following story to tell. When he awoke, lost and alone, he was lying under a bush. He had evidently fallen off the travois without waking. His people were gone, and he was very much afraid, for he had heard them talking and he knew why they were fleeing. For many days he ran from bush to bush, always keeping under cover for fear the hostile Indians would capture him.

One morning he awoke and observed a couple of old buffalo bulls standing a short distance away and looking at him. After a while they moved away; but one bull would continue to turn his head and look back. He thought the bull was inviting him to follow, and so, from day to day, he followed on after the two bulls. All summer long he followed, and when they laid down, he did also. As time went on, he was able to get closer and closer to the bulls, until finally he was able to cuddle up to one of the bulls for warmth and comfort on cold nights. The bulls paid no attention to him and never offered to molest him.

On the morning that the brother discovered him, he had awakened and found the bulls gone. That was why he was crying. The Indians reasoned that the bulls had deserted him when they knew that human help was near. This little Indian boy became the wise and good Chief Jim O'Chiese, and lived to see 107 summers.

When asked what he lived on during all these

months of wanderings, the old Indians will reply, "God fed him."

The Indians around Rocky not only bring their troubles to their brother Henry Stelfox; but they talk to him about their family traditions, and the unusual happenings among their people. A story of comparatively recent date, which they have passed on to him, may seem to our minds rather fantastic; but to the Indians it is very real.

In the early fall of 1908, Yellow Face, a lesser Chief of the Chippewas, was absent from camp when his eldest son was taken desperately ill, so ill that he realized he was going to die. He informed his people that he was going to die, but admonished them, "Don't bury me until my father returns, and tell him not to bury me as long as there is any warmth in even one small part of my body."

When the father returned a few days later, his son's body was laid out for burial. When he was given his son's message he examined the body carefully and found a little warmth under the left arm. He massaged the body and worked the limbs, and gradually the leg muscles began to twitch. After a while he was able to take some nourishment, and when he was able to speak he said to his father, "I must have been dead, and in another world, travelling. I met a man with a message from God. He told me to tell my father to travel with his people in a southerly direction, and to continue travelling until he comes to a people who will be kind to him. You

will know the leader of these people by the description which I will give you."

The son was cautioned to tell no one but his father the description of the man for whom he was looking, and the father, in turn, was to tell no one. He was assured that he would know him when he found him, for he would give him a book, which would tell the history of the Chippewa Indians.

After delivering the message to the father, the son died and was buried. Some time later, Yellow Face told his people to prepare to travel. They went in a southerly direction, through the Calgary and MacLeod districts. Every where they camped along the route, some one would arrive and in a very hostile manner tell them to move on.

Finally they came to the Belly River and camped along its bank. The next morning, when Yellow Face saw three cowboys riding up, he said to his people, "More white men coming to tell us to move on."

The cowboys dismounted and were very friendly. They asked if the Indians had any trading goods to sell and they bought buck skin moccasins and gloves. One of the cowboys said to the Indians, "Some of your women should come to the ranch house and talk to the foreman's wife. She was raised among the Blood Indians and speaks your language."

When asked who their boss was, they replied, "Olay Oleson."

"Tell him," said Yellow Face, "I want to talk with him."

When the cowboys had gone, Yellow Face said to

his people, "This seems like a sign. These people have been kind to us, the first kindly people we have met since we left camp. You women, three of you, go to the house, knock on the door, ask for something to eat and see how you are received."

Mrs. Oleson received them kindly, asked them in and fed them and gave them food to take back to their people.

"This," said Yellow Face, "is sign number two. This must be the place where we were supposed to come."

The foreman, Mr. Oleson, came to see them; but Yellow Face said, "No, this isn't the man we have come to see," and he asked the foreman, "Who is the big boss?"

The foreman told him that the big boss was away and would not be back for a few days.

Yellow Face then asked the foreman if he would tell the big boss to come and see him when he returned. He also asked if they could be allowed to camp for a few days. The foreman said that he was not the boss, but he thought it would be all right.

A few days later the boss arrived home, and was told that a band of Indians was camped on the place, waiting to see him, and the foreman suggested that he should go at once to talk to the Chief. He mounted a horse and rode over.

As he neared the camp, Yellow Face said to his people, "This is the man I have come to see. I know him by the description my boy has given me."

When the man rode up to the camp he said to Yellow Face, "What is it you want?"

Yellow Face said, "You talk!"

"No," replied the boss, "you talk."

Yellow Face then explained about his son's message and why they were there. "Yes," said the boss, "I also had a vision, and I realize why you are here, and I also have a book, which, I believe, will tell you about your family history."

In 1908 this big boss was the head of the Mormon Church in Alberta. The Indians spent some time visiting there. In 1950, the head of the Mormon Church from the Edmonton district visited Mr. Stelfox, looking for the band of Indians who had visited their people in 1908.

The Indians who trapped around the Red Deer district in the early days were nearly all Crees. No matter how urgently help was needed, they never could be induced to work. They trapped, hunted and fished as their forefathers had done for all time, and they had no desire to change their ways.

There was one exception, however, and that was Nestast, who worked at times for Wilbert Smith. Butchering, dressing and cutting up carcasses for the butcher shop was easy, for he had dressed hundreds of buffalo. Nestast also helped with the farm work, often bringing along his young son Eustak. Nestast had a large family, and Mrs. Smith always passed on to him, the outgrown clothes of her household.

As time passed, Nestast grew old with the years, and was glad to rest at the Hobema Indian Reserve.

When Mr. Smith was laid up with a broken leg, Nestast often made the trip from the Reserve to visit his old friend. Wilbert Smith understood and could talk the Cree language, and the old Indian would sit and chat with him and help to wile away the lonely hours.

Nestast passed to the "Happy Hunting Ground" before the death of Mr. Smith. Shortly after the death of the latter, the Indian's son Eustak, now himself a family man, called at the Smith home. Mrs. Smith invited him in; but explained to him that she had no old clothes to give him, as she had already given them away.

She explained this over and over; but he could not understand English and she could not understand Cree. At last, in desperation, she went to the phone and called her brother Ray Gaetz. She said to Ray, "Eustak is here and I've told him I have no clothes for him and he won't go, and I don't know what he wants."

Ray asked her to bring Eustak to the phone and he would talk to him. The art of using the phone was explained to him, and when he heard the voice of a friend speaking the Cree language, his face lighted up, and, for a minute he was speechless with wonder. After they had conversed for a time, Ray asked Eustak to call his sister to the phone. He said to her, "Eustak does not want anything. He just came to make a friendly call, after the death of your husband. You make Eustak tea, and give him a good lunch, and you drink tea with him."

After he had eaten a good lunch and enjoyed tea with his hostess, he bid Mrs. Smith a very formal good-bye and took his departure.

The folk lore of the Red Deer district would not be complete without the late Ray Gaetz's account of trading with the Indians. As Ray had a special gift for story telling, the writer will repeat the story as it was told by him.

"The winter nights were very still, no friendly dogs to bark or children to exchange banter, nothing to break the utter silence except an occasional coyote howl, the snapping of a twig, or the cracking of the ice which resounded in the quiet stillness like a pistol shot.

"As darkness closed in, perhaps I would look across the ice and see a number of Indian riders, twenty or more, Indian men and boys, Crees, Stoneys or Sarcees, coming to trade their catch of furs. The Stoneys always arrived at night; because it was their custom to leave their women and children a day's march from the Trading Post.

"When I saw them coming, I would make haste to pile the heater full of wood, we didn't use coal then, and put the kettle on to boil. In the meantime, the Indians would ride quietly to the Post, hang their sacks of furs on the wall outside, unsaddle their horses and take them down to a sheltered spot by the river, and then, as quietly as ghosts, file into the store, the leader first.

"When they entered, the leader would shake hands in a very stately manner, and each Indian, man and

boy, would follow suit lining themselves up against the wall in turn, after each had shaken hands.

"I would invite them to sit down, and they would all sit down on the floor around the stove, while I got supper for them. Custom demanded that I give each one, even boys of ten, a plug of tobacco. When this formality was attended to, I proceeded to get supper. Great slabs of rattle-snake bacon were brought forth and sliced thickly. When the bacon was sizzling hot and the tea made, I spread gunny sacks on the floor for a table cloth and invited my guests to a supper of bacon, hardtack and tea. I kept plenty of cups and plates on hand for an occasion such as this, knives or forks were not needed.

"The leader sat down first, on the floor where supper was spread, then the others followed. Everything provided always disappeared, for anything they could not eat was rolled in the corner of their blanket. Etiquette demanded that they leave nothing on their plates, for this was considered a slight to the host, indicating that he was not a good cook.

"After the meal, I cleared away the dishes and joined the Indians in their smoke. I never got any pleasure from smoking a pipe; but etiquette demanded that I join them.

"Nothing would be said about the price of furs for some time, for it was not considered good business for the Indian to appear overly anxious about the furs. The leader would do all the talking, while the others sat back and smoked. He would ask about different people, their horses and their dogs. 'Did you see . . .

and did his horse die?' After a time the leader would send a boy out to bring in a sack of furs. The bag would lay on the floor near the leader, who would ignore it for some time. I would saunter up and down the floor past the bag, but would take no notice of it.

"Finally the leader would open the bag and say, 'I bring some furs to trade'. I would appear indifferent. Then, he would again tell me he had furs to trade, and he would empty the bag on the floor and ask what I would give for them. I would state a price, perhaps thirty pounds. Since the Hudson's Bay Company continued to trade with the Indians in English money, all other traders had to do the same. When the price was stated, the leader would think for a minute and then say, 'All right'. Later, the other sacks were brought in, but there was no further discussion about the prices, for the price set for one sack answered for all.

"After the furs were disposed of, sometimes the Indians would start making their purchases; but more often they were weary and would roll in their blankets around the stove, while I occupied a small room in the back of the store for the night.

"Very early the next morning, in answer to a rap on my door, I would get up and get the Indians their breakfast, consisting of the same fare as on the previous night. After breakfast, they would decide what they would buy with the price of their furs, and in this the boys would take a part. No actual money changed hands in these transactions, the price of the furs was all taken out in trade.

"The Indians were very fond of bright ribbons which they used for their long braids, and one hundred dollars, or twenty pounds was often invested in ribbon for a start. I soon learned that it was wise for me, early in the bargaining to suggest staple things, such as tea, tobacco, flour and ammunition. Otherwise, they would spend the whole amount in things that met their fancy. Then I would say, 'How about flour?' They would answer, 'I wana-kist' (forgot). If I had been too late in making the suggestion I would have to wait for my pay for these things until the next catch of furs.

"After the trading was finished, the Indians went out to saddle their ponies. They then came back to the post, and the Chief would shake hands and bid me good-bye in a dignified manner, and every other Indian, man and boy, would do the same. They would then mount their ponies and ride away as silently as they had come. Four or five such trips were made during the winter."

In August '84, Dr. Leonard Gaetz took over the Trading Post which G. C. King had established at the Red Deer Crossing in December '83. The eldest son Ray was put in charge of the Post, and, at the time was the only white trader between Calgary and Edmonton. He had many amusing stories to tell of his experiences when trading with the Indians. His account of his first New Year's Day at the Post was particularly amusing. The Indians of the Red Deer district did not hold any special celebrations on Christmas Day; but New Year's Day, which they

called Kissing Day, was an occasion for special festivities, and, in Ray's own words, his part in these festivities is described: "New Year's Day '85 dawned bright and clear, and found me at the Trading Post as usual. Since I was Post Master and the stage coach was due to arrive with the mail that day, it was quite necessary for me to be there.

"The Indians were camped along the river flat nearby, while the braves were trapping that area. Since it was a very cold day the braves would be at home, and I expected that the wives would be home also, and I anticipated a very quiet day. When the men of the encampment were away on the trapline, the women often gathered at the Post and amused themselves by making fun of my scant knowledge of their language.

"On this, my first New Year's Day in the country, I had just opened the Post and got the fire lighted when, to my great surprise, every woman of the encampment, about twenty-five in all, filed into the Post, each wearing a broad grin. They said nothing, but continued to watch me and grin. I busied myself at this and that for a time, thinking that they would explain their errand.

"At last I realized that this was something beyond my ken, so I rushed over to Mary, who was always able to help me out of all my difficulties. Mary was a half-breed lassie from the Red River settlement married to an Englishman, Tom Lennie.

" 'Why man,' she said, 'don't you know that this is Kissing Day, and a white trader is expected to kiss

every squaw who presents herself at his trading post on New Year's morning?"

"I was dumbfounded, and in desperation I rushed out to Tom Lennie, who was bucking wood at the back door. 'Say Tom,' I shouted in nervous haste, as I explained the situation to him, 'do you want to earn a dollar?'

"'Earn a what?' said Tom, as he spat out his tobacco.

"'Do you want to earn a dollar and earn it quick?' I shouted, adding further explanations.

"'Naw,' he replied, 'do your own dirty work.'

"Crestfallen, I returned to the Post, only to be met by that bevy of smiling faces. They said nothing, but continued to grin, with their eyes turned to me with a look of expectancy.

"I had on hand a barrel of hardtack, which came in big round cakes like pieplates called cartwheels. I had treacle (molasses) also in barrels, and I spread each a liberal portion of hardtack in hopes that this might supply the sweetness they were looking for. I also had a barrel of the hard, striped mixed candy, and to make myself doubly safe, I filled little bags with candy and laid them in a heap on the counter by the door.

"When the hardtack had about disappeared, I held the door open, which they recognized as a signal for their departure, and, as they filed out, I gave each a bag of candy. As my visitors passed out, I fancied I saw a look of disappointment on their faces.

"I breathed a sigh of relief when I closed the door on the last of my morning visitors. New Year's Day never again found me at the Trading Post. I always had business elsewhere."

CHAPTER X

Our Cairn

Central Alberta Old Timers' Association was organized in 1934, with T. A. Gaetz as president, and they immediately procured nearly six acres of ground at the Old Red Deer Crossing to serve as a permanent stamping ground for the Association.

Old Fort Normandeau had been moved to serve as a farm home, and was fast falling into decay. This, the Old Timers moved back to their recreation grounds, where it serves as a hut for the Association, standing within a stone's throw of its original setting.

On June 20th, 1885, when the Fort was completed by Lieut. Normandeau and the 20 men of his detachment, one of the soldiers wrote in his diary, "This Fort will remain for many years to tell travellers that the 56th Battalion of Montreal passed from Calgary to Edmonton."

With the moving of the Fort back to the Old Red Deer Crossing, this prophecy is being fulfilled. The Fort, substantially built of logs, will stand for many years as a reminder of those troublesome days when such a fort was necessary to protect the white settlers against the Indians.

After the land was procured and the fort moved back and restored, the Association turned their thoughts to the building of a cairn as a memorial to those who had pioneered the district. Each year the

project was left over till some future date; but in 1949 a small start was made with the building of a foundation.

It remained for the Executive of 1951 however, to bring the undertaking to a successful conclusion. W. J. Botterill was president at that time, and to his executive ability and untiring efforts much of the success of the undertaking is due. Many others gave of their time, their labor or material, Thos. Edis, Secretary; W. J. Hazlett, Vice-President; W. R. Edgar, Bettenson Cartage Co.; N. M. Burnett, Ed. Millman, and perhaps others. MacLean Granite Co. made and donated the beautiful plaque built into the face of the cairn, which reads: "This marks the site of the first Trading Post between Calgary and Edmonton, and the Old Red Deer Crossing. Erected by the Old Timers' Association in memory of those who pioneered the Red Deer District. Yr. '51."

The cairn was built from native stone, gathered from the banks of the nearby river and creeks, at a cost of \$281.45. The work was done by W. H. Woolgar of Bentley, assisted by his son C. R. Woolgar. It is conical in shape, measuring 15 feet in circumference at the base and four feet at the top, standing eight and a-half feet high, topped with hard white cement.

It is a beautiful cairn, a fitting memorial to the Pioneers of the Red Deer district, most of whom have passed beyond the "Great Divide."

It was a gala day on July 25th, when members of the Old Timers' Association, their sons and daughters

250 strong, gathered at the Old Red Deer Crossing for the unveiling and dedication of the cairn. The sun did not shine very brightly from the heavens that day; but there was sunshine in the hearts and joy reflected from the faces of Old Timers who, for long, had looked forward to this day.

It was a colorful and dignified ceremony, with W. J. Botterill as master of ceremonies. The presence of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police flanking the cairn represented the old guard; while a patrol of Boy Scouts and Girl Guides represented the future pioneers of the Red Deer district.

W. J. Wilde, of Red Deer, was guest speaker. Taking as his subject "The End of the Blackfoot Trail," in imagination he took his audience back to those hectic days when the Blackfeet, the most dreaded of all Indian tribes, claimed the Red Deer river as the most northerly boundary in their territory, and the Old Red Deer Crossing as a God-given camping ground. His graphic description of their different treks to the Crossing and experiences while in camp there, made these hectic days live again for old and young alike.

The cairn was unveiled by O. Sigurdson, of Little Red Deer, the oldest man on the grounds that day.

Rev. W. R. Bell, M.A., of the Red Deer Presbyterian church, conducted a very impressive memorial service. Taking as his theme "We reap today what was sown yesterday," he spoke in glowing terms of the rich heritage enjoyed by the people of the Red Deer District as a result of the plantings of the

Pioneers, and our responsibility to continue into the future the ideals which they held. "It is a challenge," said the speaker, "to those living today and those who will come after, to hold high these ideals."

Here, on the recreation grounds of the Old Timers' Association, generations to come will meet, renew old acquaintances and swap yarns of the past.

In the shadow of Fort Normandeau they will recount tales of the Rebellion of '85, when the white settlers of the Red Deer district were obliged to flee to Calgary to escape the menace of the Indians; they will tell of the building of the Fort, which today stands as a memorial to the soldiers who risked their lives to bring peace and order to the West.

They will gather around the cairn, built as a memorial to the Pioneers of the Red Deer district, and they will bow their heads in reverence as they tell their children and their grandchildren of the struggles, the hardships and the accomplishments of the Pioneers of the past.

As they recount the folklore of the Red Deer district, they will feel again the joy and pride of accomplishment, for they will point out Fort Normandeau and the Pioneer Cairn, and they will say to a younger generation, "These are our roots, our heritage."

END